STOURBRIDGE
CHRONICLE

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DISGRACE

TV crime show is a shocker, says MP

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RUDY GOOD

Standing ovation for Lenny's play

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QUEST ZONE IS UNDER THREAT

THE firm behind the loss-making Quest entertainment zone at the Merry Hill shopping centre has warned it may have to close the attraction.

Opened just two years ago, the £1.3 million activities centre has failed to make a profit and operator Paragon Entertainment says its 'performance continues to be challenging'.

By Simon Penfold

The company, which built visitor attractions including Titanic Belfast, the Wallace and Gromit ride at Blackpool Pleasure Beach and the official Olympic Museum in Switzerland, has slashed the value of the Quest centre by £420,000 to just £150,000 and warns that closure remains an option.

Paragon says it is also considering further investment or moving the location of the attraction, which includes rope walks, soft play areas, a jungle-gym assault course and a Nerf combat arena.

The Quest centre created 30 jobs when it first opened but now has just two full-time staff and a number of part-timers.

Talks

A spokesman confirmed that the company had been in talks with Merry Hill's new owners, the Intu group, but declined to comment on the nature or content of the discussions.

Paragon used the Quest centre to launch the attractions arm of its business in 2012. Previously it had built attractions for other firms to run.

Quest was also seen as a show room and a test market to explore and develop their new concepts.

In a trading statement this week, Paragon's chief executive Mike Pyrah said: "The group has continued to address the performance and profitability of Quest and loss margins were successfully narrowed in the first half of 2014.

"Performance continues to be challenging and management has impaired the value of this asset by a further £420,000 to a book value of £150,000.

"The performance of Quest Merry Hill is under regular review and management continues to consider all its options, including possible closure."

The lack of success at the Quest centre is one of the number of woes for Paragon at the moment. Although it has a record order book, worth £12m, it has seen its revenues drop by about £500,000 to £4m over the last six months due to contract delays.

The firm also expects second half of the year revenues to be lower than expected. As a result it is predicting an overall loss for the year of about £100,000.

Mr Pyrah, one of its founders, is stepping down to become group sales and marketing director.

Meanwhile, vice chairman Mark Taylor takes over as executive chairman while the firm looks for a new CEO.

A blooming good result in awards

With the gold award is Stourbridge in Bloom co-ordinator David Harcourt with one of the displays in Stourbridge

BEAUTIFUL towns, villages, pubs and hotels from across the Black Country have triumphed in the 50th Heart of England in Bloom Awards.

The annual prize-giving celebrates the best in floral displays across the Midlands – rewarding those who go the extra mile to make communities across the region more attractive places to live.

Winning gold in the 'small city' category was Stourbridge in the small city category and it marks the seventh time Stourbridge has successfully gone for gold.

Mr Harcourt, who has organised Stourbridge's Bloom entry for a decade, said he was delighted with the victory which saw Stourbridge awarded a perfect 'ten' for the landscaping of the revamped town clock area.

Credit

He added that it was a credit to all those who supported the campaign.

More than 200 delegates from villages, towns, communities and cities attended the award presentation from the 54 entries, along with representatives from some of the 31 entrants in the Hotel and Pub Grounds Campaign.

A judge has visited Stourbridge in July and viewed the new floral displays in the town centre. The awards in the Heart of England in Bloom Campaign were announced by the Heart of England in Bloom committee at Theatre Seven in Shrewsbury.

Chairman of Heart of England in Bloom, Roger Bache stated "Entrants give a lot of time and effort to make where they live and work a nicer, safer place to be and are very proud when they receive their prestigious awards."

Aldridge and Bloxwich repeated their 2013 success by receiving gold award swhile Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall received a silver gilt.

35 pupils are sent home over trainers

MORE than 30 children were sent home from school for wearing Nike trainers instead of shoes.

Parents spoke of their anger at having their children taken out of High Arcal School for wearing the sports shoes, which they claim they had been allowed to wear previously.

Jo Manson, head teacher, said students were sent home for failing to adhere to the uniform policy. "There have only been 35 students sent home and there are 1,200 pupils here, it's a very small amount," she said.

It comes after 100 pupils were sent home from nearby The Coseley School for wearing black trainers.

Pupils gathered outside the school gates on Monday morning claimed they had been told they could wear the trainers until half term.

Mrs Manson said: "School policy has always been no trainers can be worn. A vast majority of parents understand our position. We have been doing what we can to try and help parents, by giving them a loan.

"We normally send a letter and a text to parents before the school year but there was a problem with our texting system at the start of this year. Our website has always had the uniform policy."

Episode axed after arrest

THE latest episode of Cops and Robbers had to be axed after a man in the show was arrested for a serious sex offence against a woman in Birmingham.

The Channel Four series, following officers dealing with offenders in Dudley and Birmingham, has been condemned by MPs and residents.

Monday's edition was postponed after a 31-year-old man was arrested. He did not feature in last week's episode of the four-part documentary.

Rethink on plans for old post office HQ

CHANGES have been made to plans to bring a landmark in Dudley town centre back into use, following pressure from a heritage watchdog.

Birmingham developer Parkstone Group first unveiled proposals earlier this year to turn the historic former post office headquarters on the corner of Wolverhampton Street and Priory Road into 21 one-bed flats.

But English Heritage raised objections to a proposed accessibility ramp at the front of the impressive Edwardian building.

The heritage watchdog claimed the ramp 'seriously harmed' the imposing appearance of the Grade II listed building.

In updated plans submitted to Dudley Council this week, the developer has changed the front elevation design of the Palazzo style building to remove the ramp.

In a letter to Dudley Council, Alan Taylor, historic buildings inspector for English Heritage, said the body had no objection in principle to bringing the building back into use. But he said: "English Heritage is very concerned by the intrusive design and siting of the proposed access ramp across the main Wolverhampton Street elevation.

Work to create the flats is costing around £1.5m.

Police hunt park attacker

A TEENAGE girl was sexually assaulted on her way to school in Brierley Hill.

Police say the 16-year-old was walking through Woodside Park, near the Highgate Road entrance when the incident happened at around 8.20am on Monday, September 8.

The attacker described as white, around 5ft 4ins, in his 20s and of medium build with messy brown hair, wearing grey tracksuit bottoms and a black top. Call police on 101.

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MP backs school fingerprint scheme

A MP who is also the governor of a school which has installed fingerprints scanners in a £20,000 project said staff were 'ahead of the game' by launching the scheme.

But Stourbridge MP Margot James that parents' views will be considered after some said they were concerned about the move.

Redhill School in Stourbridge will bring in the technology as part of a plan to implement a cashless system throughout the school. It will be used in the canteen to help cut queue times.

It comes after schools other parts of the Black Country, including Dudley and Wolverhampton, have trialled the scheme.

The system requires pupils to press a finger against a machine which converts the print into biometric data. This can then be used to identify individual pupils accounts.

The 1,200-pupil school in Junction Road detailed its plans in a letter to parents last month.

Ms James said: "Redhill is ahead of the game with this kind of technology.

"I gather some parents are a little alarmed with having their child's fingerprints taken but provided parents are comfortable with the scheme then I'm OK with it."

Dudley's Conservative opposition spokesman for children's services, Councillor Glenis Simms, added she did have some concerns over the scheme. "I can see the benefits but I also have some concerns over what may be seen as another form of 'big brother' surveillance on us all as we go about our daily life," she added.

Tougher time ahead for benefit claimants

PEOPLE looking for work in the Black Country will be obliged to spend 35 hours a week in a job centre trying to find employment, as part of a new trial starting next month.

This October will see the introduction of the pilot job search schemes, where unemployed benefit claimants will be required to carry supervised job searches every week. Claimants will be expected to sign an attendance register at a local job centre t 9am and search for jobs until 5pm, for five days a week over three months.

If they fail to do so, they will face sanctions, with the first sanction resulting in the loss of one month's worth of benefits, and the second sanction culminating in the withdrawal of three months' money.

The scheme is also being rolled out in East Anglia, West Yorkshire, Surrey and Sussex and will run until March next year. If a success, the Department for Work and Pensions say it may be extended to cover the whole country. A total of 6,000 claimants are being selected to take part.

They will be selected by two criteria: the first batch will be aged between 18-24 and have been claiming for 20-24 weeks, while the second group will be over 25 and have been claiming for 33-37 weeks. They will only be selected if their job adviser thinks they will benefit from the extra support to find work.

A spokesperson from the DWP said: "It's right that we ask claimants to do everything they can to look for work in return for their benefits and this pilot is looking at how we provide that extra support to those whose lack of job-hunting skills is preventing them from finding a job".

Critics claim the problem lies in a lack of jobs rather than a lack of job seeking.

Display on those who survived war

A BLACK Country historian is appealing for people to come forward with stories and photographs relating to the men and women who played a role in the 1914-18 war but came back to tell the tale.

Stan Hough, of Lower Gornal British Legion, holds an exhibition about the Great War at Coseley Library on Saturday, and is hoping more people from the Dudley area will come forward with information.

The exhibition will also look at the stories of servicemen killed in action, particularly focusing on those named on the war memorial outside the former Mount Tabor Church in Woodsetton, Dudley.

Mr Hough said: "We are of course aware of the those that did not return from the memorials and monuments bearing their names, but we do lack information on those that did return, which only local knowledge can provide.

Mr Hough said the branch at Ruiton Street, had built up a collection of artefacts, photographs and histories of people involved in the war.

Email br3247rbl@btinternet.com to get in touch before the event or visit on Saturday.

Truckers back transplants

Truckers and their supporters celebrate the convoy's progress across the Black Country

HORNS blared and crowds cheered as more than 40 trucks took to the streets of the Black Country to raise funds to help people who need organ transplants.

The huge convoy, which weighed in excess of 1,500 tons, set off from Hilton Park Services and passed through five Black Country centres before arriving at the Kingfisher Club in Wall Heath.

At its peak, the fleet measured a mile in length and featured more than 60 vehicles, as cars and vans joined in.

Crowds gathered to cheer the drivers on during their 24-mile trip through Wolverhampton, Bilston, West Bromwich, Oldbury and Dudley. The event raised more than £1,200 for the Liver Foundation at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

Organiser Andrew Day led the convoy in the 44-ton Volvo truck he drives for WK Edwards in Russells Hall. He said the campaign was inspired by his wife Rachel, who underwent a life-saving kidney transplant on Christmas Day in 2006.

The rise and fall of council high rises

A HISTORY project based on the rise and fall of council flats in the Black Country is available online.

Residents have shared their experiences in their own words through a selection of history recordings produced by Block Capital, a Heritage Lottery-funded project which is investigating the history of 1960s high rises in the region.

Councillor Elias Mattu, Wolverhampton City Council's cabinet member for leisure and communities, said: "This is a fascinating piece of social history which charts the rise and fall of tower blocks across the Black Country and will be of interest to anyone who wants to find out how their community has developed over the years."

The interviews include what it was like to move into the towers when they were first built. Kevin Aston, one of the interviewees, moved into the new Bolton Court flats in Tipton as a child. He said: "I was so chuffed about it that I went to school the one day, and I think I brought three of my school teachers home to show them the flats, much to my mum's surprise."

Contact Chaz Mason on 01902 552040.

Bonfire night pallets plea

DUDLEY Council are appealing for businesses to donate wooden pallets for the massive bonfire at Himley Hall fireworks show.

Culture boss Councillor Hilary Bills said: "Our bonfire and firework show at Himley Hall and Park is one of the biggest and best in the country and rightly attracts thousands of people."

On November 8 gates open at 4.30pm with the bonfire lit at 7.45pm and fireworks from 8.30pm.

Only unbroken wooden pallets are accepted. Companies who are able to deliver should call (01384) 817817.

Town ghost tour

A GHOST tour around Dudley town centre will be held on October 8.

People will be able to hear spooky stories about Dudley's past during the walk which will start from the Station Hotel, Castle Hill, at 8pm. To book a place on the tour call 0870 3207000.

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Bust jams and boost safety is plan's aim

WORK will get started on a £210,000 project to cut congestion and boost pedestrian safety around Sedgley town centre as the scheme is due to be rubber-stamped this week.

Dudley Council has been awarded cash to carry out the works will are also aimed slashing queues for motorists at junctions.

Transport boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed was presenting the scheme to a meeting of the cabinet yesterday using the cash allocation through a West Midlands-wide road improvements scheme.

Pedestrian crossings are due to be upgraded along the A459 through town centre streets to help safety for shoppers.

Works will take place on the High Street and Dudley Street near the Bull Ring and Townsend Avenue. There will also be works near the Co-Operative food store in High Holborn at Tipton Street traffic signals.

It comes just months after a major roadworks scheme causing chaos for motorists in the town whenGospel End Road was partially closed for five months last year to allow a stone wall to be dismantled and rebuilt further back from the road.

Armed raid on Aldi store

THREE masked men armed with machetes carried out a robbery at a supermarket in Dudley, leaving one female member of staff with minor injuries.

The robbers burst into Aldi, in Saltwells Road, at 7.15am on Wednesday, September 10, and threatened staff with the weapons before leaving with cash in a getaway car and heading toward Cradley Heath.

A 22-year-old shop worker suffered a cut to her hand during the raid and was treated by paramedics.

Anyone with information should call police on 101.

Pub site homes

PLANS for five four-bedroom detached homes on the site of a Black Country pub have been lodged.

Horgan Homes and Developments Ltd has submitted proposals to Dudley Council planners for the scheme at the Yew Tree Inn in Hockley Lane, Dudley.

Superfast broadband to get £6m funding

A £6 MILLION funding boost has been secured for a project aimed at connecting 95 per cent of the Black Country to high speed broadband by 2017.

The money will see a major investment in infrastructure in Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley.

The money has been secured thanks to the four Black Country councils working in partnership with the Black Country Consortium to find £3 million of funding, which will be matched by the Government-backed Broadband Delivery UK. A further £1.5 million is set to be raised by service providers to complete the project.

Dudley MP Ian Austin has been campaigning to get the Government to back the plans for high speed broadband in the area.

Secured

He has recently received a letter from Digital Economy Minister Ed Vaizey to confirm the funding had been secured.

He said: "Constituents got in touch with me after being told by broadband companies that there were no plans for Dudley to get superfast broadband.

"Places like London have been the first to benefit and I don't see why Dudley should be left behind, so I'm really pleased 95 per cent of people in the Black Country will now be covered. I'm pleased the Black Country Consortium and local councils have made this progress. Now I want the Government to guarantee that Dudley will get covered as soon as possible."

Councillor Judy Foster, Dudley Council cabinet member for economic regeneration, added: "In Dudley we are absolutely committed to ensuring businesses in our borough have the platform to prosper and thrive. Only 60 per cent of businesses in the Black Country have access to super-fast broadband but this agreement by the four Black Country councils and the LEP, will help meet the target of super-fast broadband being available to 95 per cent of people."

Blaze death mechanic had threatened to kill his wife

AN ESTRANGED husband pointed a gun at his wife, poured petrol over her and threatened to set them both on fire.

A inquest heard that Brian Franklin died after he set their family home in Dudley alight but his wife Lisa Franklin escaped.

Smethwick Coroners' Court was told that 42-year-old mechanic Mr Franklin had broken into their house in Wood Street on February 8 armed with a, air rifle and a petrol can following the break-up of their marriage.

By Jon Pritchard

After dragging Mrs Franklin down the stairs in front of her two children, who he had locked in her car on the drive, Mr Franklin poured petrol on her and threatened to set her alight.

Escape

Mrs Franklin managed to escape to a neighbour's house and called the police but her husband set the house on fire and was later found dead in an upstairs bedroom.

She told the inquest: "I was upstairs in my son's bedroom and the first thing I know is I am being pushed across the bedroom and he stood there pointing a gun at me. He grabbed me by my hair and dragged me downstairs."

Mrs Franklin told the inquest she had ended the marriage following an assault on February 3 where he had slit her wrist.

The care-coordinator said: "He was screaming at me 'you have ruined my life, I'm not going to prison for anyone.' He was convinced after the assault he was going to prison.

"He grabbed a bag and got a petrol can out but I thought he was bluffing. Then when he opened it I could smell petrol and he was throwing it all over the house. He said if he was going then he was taking me with him. I was telling him to stop being stupid and I pushed him into the kitchen and turned and ran."

Robin Balmain, senior coroner for the Black Country, said Mr Franklin died from severe burns covering more than 50 per cent of his body.

He said: "It is difficult to know what was going on in his mind but given the threats to his wife it seems to me that his intention was that he would kill himself.

"It is difficult to imagine the terror that Mrs Franklin and the two boys must have suffered."

Quiz night to help charity

A QUIZ will take place on Thursday, October 2, to raise money for the work of youth charity The Prince's Trust.

The event backed by solicitors Higgs & Sons is being held at The Venue in High Street, Dudley, from 7pm. It will be helping the charity support 13 to 30-year-olds who are unemployed or at risk of exclusion from school.

The cost is a minimum donation of £75 per team of four. There will be food for the teams. Call (01384) 327341.

Organisers, medics and supporters getting ready for the run in Halesowen

Groups getting behind big run

A record number of volunteers have signed up to help at the Black Country Road Run this Sunday.

The run ,which starts and finishes at the Rumbow in Halesowen town centre, features a 10km road race and 5km fun run.

The courses will see competitors put through their paces in a bid to raise funds for charity.

Volunteers will be on hand with a number of organisations having pledged their support. These include the West Midlands 4x4 Response, the Midlands Bike Marshals, Halesowen Zion Church, Old Hill Holy Trinity Church and Halesowen College.

Halesowen Athletics and Cycling Club is also backing the event, with Maurice Endacott named as race director on the day. Prolific fundraiser Blind Dave Heeley – famed for running seven marathons across seven continents in seven days – is set to take part in the 10km run.

Alan Blower, of Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club, which has organised the event, said he was grateful to all all the volunteers who give up their time to help make the race a success.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Firms needed to back festive lights

AN APPEAL has been launched for sponsors for Christmas trees and festive decorations.

Dudley Council is looking for companies who are interested in sponsoring the borough's festivities. Christmas lights switch-on events will be held in Dudley, Brierley Hill, Stourbridge, Halesowen and other areas across the borough.

One sponsor for each event will be invited to switch on the lights with Mayor of Dudley Councillor Margaret Aston. Call (01384) 815228 for details.

Jobs are saved in company buyout

MORE than 50 jobs have been saved after an historic Black Country boiler company was rescued from administration by its own management.

Bosses at Wellman have put together a management buyout deal for the business, which went into administration last month.

It saves 52 jobs at the Newfield Road factory in Oldbury, which can trace its roots back to 1840 and Dudley iron boat and boilermaking firm of Danks of Netherton.

Charity night in aid of Dementia UK

A CHARITY night will be held in Stourbridge in aid of Dementia UK. The event featuring music and a raffle will be at Katie Fitzgerald's pub on Friday, October 3, from 8pm.

Organiser Emma Weaver, of Kingswinford, said: "My grandfather suffered with dementia as did my boyfriend's." Band Heroes of Hanoi will headline. Tickets are £3 , call Emma on 07891896476.

New signs are planned at college

COLLEGE bosses have plans for new signs at their Black Country campus.

Birmingham Metropolitan College has submitted proposals to Dudley Council for signs at the Hagley Road site in Stourbridge.

It comes as work continues on a £5 million revamp of the site. The proposals will be considered by planners.

Uni memorial fund

A STUDENT hardship fund is being launched by the University of Wolverhampton in memory of Lord Bilston, former city MP Dennis Turner, after a Government move to axe access to learning funding.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

IT'S too late now but, with hindsight, the campaign to keep the UK together should have played the Celt card and appealed to the Scots' better nature and kinship with the people of Wales. Imagine the impact of a series of short TV commercials with much-loved Welsh celebrities pleading tearfully: "Please, please don't leave us alone with the English."

MORE curious paint names. We are about to redecorate the front room and have narrowed the choice of emulsion down to Churlish Green, Dimpse, Mole's Breath, Archive, Midriff or Placenta. All but two of these are genuine.

I'M off to France next week on a pilgrimage to Cambrai, Arras, Agincourt and various other battlefields. It's a coach trip, arguably the finest mode of travel ever invented. I love the sheer freedom from responsibility. You just turn up, load your case and let some jovial driver take you there, bring you back and deliver you to all points in between. Plus, you can admire the French countryside with a glass of plonk. Parfait. This year marks the centenary of the charabanc. I hope someone is celebrating it.

IRRITATED by the expression "as useless as a chocolate teapot," boffins at Nestle have created one which lasted long enough to brew a cuppa. Well done, all. Now, what about the ashtray for a motorcycle?

WATCHING Peter Capaldi losing his temper as Doctor Who is like watching Lewis Hamilton racing without changing up from first gear. To see Capaldi at his monstrous best, go to YouTube and find the White House scene from the movie In The Loop when his character Malcolm Tucker takes offence at being briefed by an aide who looks about 14. Still terrifying after all these years.

VIVIAN Boyack and Alice Dubes, a lesbian couple in their 90s have just got married in Iowa, having been together since 1942. The preacher remarked at the ceremony: "This is a celebration of something that should have happened a very long time ago." Amen to that. It is only fair that couples like Vivian and Alice can enjoy proper civic and legal rights. But what about those same-sex pairs, like elderly brothers and sisters, who live together as life partners for companionship but are not gay? In England gay couples now have the choice of a civil partnership or marriage. Non-gay couples do not. It seems unfair that issues such as inheritance tax and pension transfer should depend on what people get up to under the sheets.

CHURCH authorities announce that the reburial of Richard III next March will focus on "dignity and honour." Which is only fair. Richard ended his days in a muddy melee at Bosworth and lay buried under a car park in Leicester. Second time round he'll have a proper ceremony, a proper grave and a proper mode of conveyance. A hearse, a hearse . . . .

WHO decides on the names of birds? We encountered a brilliant yellow bird down by the stream on the farm where we have lived for the past 30 years. I have never seen a bird quite so yellow. If it found itself in an aviary full of yellowhammers and canaries, people would inquire: "What's that yellow bird over there?" Yet for all its striking, sunshiny yellowness, the yellow bird turns out to be a grey wagtail. Whatever its proper name, this is the first time we've ever seen one around Chateau Rhodes. Times are changing. Species are on the move. Those big green parakeets cannot be far behind. Even the RSPB website admits: "The grey wagtail is more colourful than its name suggests." So give it another name, eh?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Cops show misses the point for police

WHEN it comes to stopping convicted crooks from committing more crime, West Midlands Police is the best in the country but officers say that success failed to come across in Channel 4's Cops and Robbers.

Of the 171 local authorities in the UK, some of the lowest re-offending rates can be found on our doorstep with Sandwell rated top, Dudley second and Wolverhampton eighth. The success has been attributed to an initiative launched by West Midlands Police seven years ago which involves officers working with offenders in an effort to set them on the straight and narrow.

But according to Superintendent Paul Betts, the force's lead for the Integrated Offender Management programme, Channel 4's documentary highlighted the criminal activities of repeat offenders at the expense of the work police do to stop them. Last week's episode focused on Jason 'Stokesy' Stokes from Pensnett and a drug addict known as Becky.

Supt Betts said: "It focused on the two characters involved, meaning the work we have done to reduce re-offending wasn't really made clear. They have a programme to make and there were obviously plenty of sensationalist comments that came out of it from the characters involved. But the statistics speak for themselves. We have been very successful when it comes to managing offenders' behaviour.

"Locking people up repeatedly does not work. They may have issues with employment, mental health, debt, drug abuse. It is a cycle. That's where our support networks come in. The work is challenging but at the moment I think we are getting the balance right.

'Disgrace' — anger at TV's depiction of town

By Peter Madeley

IS the West Midlands really a crime-ravaged hell-hole populated by scroungers, thugs and thieves?

Of course it's not, but viewers of Channel 4 may be starting to think the region has turned into a British version of downtown Detroit.

First we had Benefits Street, the fly-on-the-wall documentary showing the daily activities of White Dee and her merry band of Brummies on the dole. Now the channel has launched its latest arrow at the region in the shape of Cops and Robbers, a no holds barred look at prolific criminals and the work police do to try and persuade them to curb their crooked ways.

Last week's first episode focused on Dudley — ironically one of the country's most successful spots when it comes to reducing re-offending. It wasn't a pretty picture.

Reducing

We were introduced to 27-year-old Jason 'Stokesy' Stokes, a self-confessed one-man crimewave who revealed his childhood ambition was to become an armed robber. He never made the grade and instead focused his talents on petty crime, a pastime that has led to him spending a large chunk of his adult life locked up.

Then there's Becky, a young woman who finds pinching from shops as easy as sucking back on her crack pipe. She's lost all four of her children to social services.

It all makes for very bleak viewing. But while there are people on benefits all over the country and crime is hardly consigned to the area around Dudley town centre, people in the region are starting to ask, why always us?

Since Cops and Robbers aired many proud Dudley folk have taken to social media to express outrage at what many see as an unfair depiction of life in the town. Councillors and MPs have also had their say.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said he was 'outraged' by the programme. "I thought it was a total disgrace," he said. "You can find people like that in every town and city, but of course they had to single us out.

"There are plenty of decent, hard working people in the town, some of whom come from difficult backgrounds.

"The characters they decided to feature are a nothing but a blight on our community. I want to see them behind bars not splashed across the television screen."

Dudley Council's deputy leader Councillor Peter Lowe echoed the view. He said: "It painted a picture of Dudley that is not recognisable to the vast majority of people who live in the town. The majority of people in the town are law abiding citizens.

"What I saw on television was a sad indictment on a minority of people who have formed a criminal underclass. The programme did not reflect well on Dudley in any way."

Many people from the Black Country aired their feelings on Twitter following the first show.

"I live in the town #copsandrobbers is being filmed in. We aren't all like him. I have a job and I don't even own a tracksuit either," said one Twitter user.

Another said: "Cops and Robbers will do for Dudley what Benefits Street did for Brum."

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of the Conservatives on Dudley Council, said the issues addressed in the programme should be highlighted rather than 'swept under the carpet'.

"This sort of thing is going on in Dudley, so why try and hide it away?

"There are some very undesirable people living among us and we must find ways to deal with them. Some people just want to pretend crime isn't happening."

Channel 4 say Dudley was singled out for coverage because of West Midlands Police's efforts in lowering re-offending rates.

Leading

A spokesman for the channel said: "We make clear that this is a national issue but one that the West Midlands Police are leading the way in confronting.

"The location of the documentary was based on the unique access we gained within the West Midlands Police's dedicated offender management team.

"They are extremely proud of the success they are having tackling prolific offenders on their patch."

Jason Stokes from C4 documentary Cops and Robbers

Deirdre Kelly, known as White Dee, in Benefits Street

Hospital trust one of top 100 employers

HEALTH trusts in the Black Country have been named among the top 100 employers in the NHS.

The accolade has been awarded to three organisations in the area after NHS trusts were rated over staff engagement and satisfaction surveys.

Appearing in the top 100 are Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs Sandwell and Rowley Regis hospitals, and The Royal Wolverhampton Trust which runs New Cross Hospital.

Also rankedis Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust, which runs services at Bloxwich Hospital and Bushey Fields Hospital in Dudley.

Following the national survey, each organisation's data was categorised into seven areas, including leadership and planning, role satisfaction, work environment and training and development, to determine how good they were in each.

As part of its praise for Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, which also runs City Hospital in Birmingham, the journal said: "Its highly motivated staff are well trained and suffer fewer incidences of discrimination, as well as fewer pressures at work."

Firms vye for HS2 contracts

EIGHTY-FOUR companies from the West Midlands are to bid for £10 billion worth of contracts to build HS2.

Representing more than 150,000 workers, the firms include three from Dudley, two from Wolverhampton and one from Sandwell.

Business leaders will meet with bosses of the high speed rail project at two conferences being held in London and Manchester in October.

The £50 billion scheme is moving closer towards construction with a planned to start to the huge engineering project in 2017.

Pub cuts prices

A PUB in Sedgley is reducing its prices by 7.5 per cent for one day on Wednesday, September 24. The White Horse in Dudley Street is part of the Amber Taverns pubs group, which is supporting Tax Equality Day to show the impact a cut in VAT would have.

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No more elections like last one please

THE new West Midland Police and Crime Commissioner has called for no further elections like the one in which he was selected

David Jamieson will urge the Home Office to change the rules so that future polls for the post are not held at such short notice in the midst of the summer holidays.

The August 21 election, in which he was chosen as a replacement for the late Bob Jones, cost £3.7 million to stage — that's almost £20 for each of the 10 per cent of the voters that bothered to turn out.

He said: "It was not very sensible to hold an election costing that much in the middle of August and we have got to learn from what happened.

"I want the legislation revised and will be making representations to the Home Office in the hope that the necessary changes can be in place by the next Police and Crime Commissioner elections in 2016."

Solihull-born former Labour Transport Minister Mr Jamieson, an former MP, added: "The present Government created this legislation. It was botched from the start and not properly thought through."

Former school is hit by blaze

A LARGE blaze ripped through a derelict school in Blackheath.

More than 40 firefighters and eight fire trucks attended the scene at the former Holt Farm Primary School. The roof of part of the 105-year-old building was destroyed by the fire, which took more than two hours to extinguish.

Flames and plumes of black smoke were visible for miles around the scene on Saturday afternoon. Smethwick crews were joined by firefighters from Dudley, Highgate, Oldbury, Tipton, Ladywood and Haden Cross.

Scooter wrecked

FIREFIGHTERS battled a severe blaze at a home in Dudley after a bin caught fire. The blaze, which is believed to have been started by a cigarette, spread to a fence, caused damage to a van, a garage and destroyed a mobility scooter at the Laurel Road home.

Living museum is attracting more visitors

BLACK Country Living Museum has revealed that visitor numbers are on the up as bosses bid to turn around the finances of the attraction.

Last year the heritage museum made a loss of around £15,000 as numbers dropped for the third year running to around 240,000. But in the first eight months of this year the museum has seen visitor numbers bounce back, up 13 per cent to 185,448 compared to the same period last year.

The figures also show an increase in people coming through the doors during the six-week school holiday period, up 10 per cent to 52,915.

Family

The numbers were boosted by successful events such as the 1940s Weekend and the Family Night, which sold out for the first time.

Marketing and communications director Laura Wakelin said: "We are very pleased about the number of people we have seen this year, it is especially good to see the numbers up over the summer period. This is an exciting period for the museum and we look to further our appeal to visitors, not just from the local area but further afield."

Earlier this year the museum accounts revealed it made a £15,000 loss last year but even this was a big improvement on the year before, when it revealed losses of £300,000.

Mrs Wakelin said the increase in visitor numbers along with an investment to come from a £2.56 million Arts Council grant will help the museum's finances.

She put the increase in visitor numbers down to the good summer weather, 'astute' marketing and new features such as the replica of a greengrocers in Willenhall, which opened before the school holidays.

She said: "We ran events to do with the First World War and opened a greengrocers right at the start of the summer. We are an open air museum and I think the good weather may have also helped us."

Three sent to prison for roles in cannabis factory

THREE men have been jailed for their part in a cannabis factory which had the capacity to generate an annual income of £170,000.

The operation was discovered when police raided a warehouse in Dudley on June 7 this year. Inside the unit, rented by KS Ltd, officers found 64 cannabis plants and the trappings of a 'rug-producing set-up, said Mr Stuart Clarkson, prosecuting at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

This included an automatic watering system for the plants and an electricity supply that had been diverted.

Police went to the landlord who put them in touch with 55-year-old Adrian Pearce, boss of KS Ltd. He told officers he had sub-let the unit to Steven Smith. Police searched the 37-year-old plasterer's address where they found items similar to those at the unit which, in turn, brought 36-year-old Adam McNally into the frame.

Evidence from almost 80 phone calls connected all three in the cannabis enterprise.

Mr Carl Templar-Vasey, defending Smith, said his role had been limited to buying items from eBay because he had an account and for which he was paid £20 an item. "His was a lesser role," said Mr Templar-Vasey.

Defending Pearce, Mr Gurdeep Garcha said his client had been driven by financial difficulties to allowing his premises to be used as a cannabis factory

By Marion Brennan

after a downturn in work brought on by the recession meant he was no longer able to pay rent on the unit. "He knew what was going on but he turned a blind eye to it. He now understands he shouldn't have accepted the offer. He has an impressive work history and is an active member of a local charity. Many have spoken up for him," said Mr Garcha.

Self-employed fitter McNally had been tempted to do a favour for a nominal fee, transporting some equipment to the premises.

Smith, of Roman Road, Warley, and McNally, of Meadowhill Drive, Stourbridge, both pleaded guilty to producing a class B drug. Smith was jailed for 54 weeks and McNally for 45 weeks. Pearce, of Compton Court, Kinver, admitted allowing his premises to be used as a cannabis factory and was jailed for 48 weeks.

Judge John Warner said the enterprise was 'a professional cannabis set-up.'

Tarby is at the town hall

VETERAN comedian Jimmy Tarbuck is to perform at Dudley Town Hall on October 24.

Audiences will be treated to anecdotes from Tarby that range from school days with John Lennon to playing golf with Bing Crosby. The entertainer was a host of recently revived 1960s TV variety show Sunday Night at the London Palladium. Doors open 8pm and tickets cost £23. Call the box office on 0870 320 7000.

Gutted — the popular village phone box library following the arson attack

Village aim to restore library in phone box

A CALLOUS arsonist stopped to admire their wicked ork, videoing one of the world's smallest libraries as it burned.

A grainy CCTV image showed the vandal taking out their phone and capturing the moment as they destroyed the phone box book exchange in Clent, near Stourbridge. A car nearby was also set on fire.

The charred remains of hundreds of books lay inside the blackened skeleton of the familiar red phone box on Bromsgrove Road, celebrated as one of the world's smallest libraries. A fundraising drive is under way so that the phone box library, destroyed in July, can be restored.

Paul Timmins, Chairman of the Clent History Society, said: "It was a pointless act of destruction, there's no gain for the person that did it, and the consequence for the rest of the village is that it's created a lot of upset. But in one respect it has created a bit of community spirit because people are discussing it."

Cheques made payable to the Clent History Society can be sent to Yew Tree Cottage, Bromsgrove Road, Holy Cross, Clent, Worcestershire, DY9 9QF.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Survey to give residents a say

BOSSES will be asking residents' for their views with a telephone survey.

Deputy leader of Dudley Council, Councillor Pete Lowe, visited the Dudley Council Plus call centre to show his support for the survey.

He said: "We genuinely want to get involved with local people and let residents have their say on local issues.

The five minute survey will allow residents to tell the council whether they are satisfied with services and rate the value for money of those services.

Help and advice to quit smoking

HELP will be on hand for smokers wanting to quit during a series of events.

The Dudley Stop Smoking Service is supporting the Stoptober campaign. Staff will be offering help and advice from 10am to 2.30pm at Tesco, Birmingham Road, Dudley, on Tuesday; Asda, Brierley Hill, on September 25; Tesco Stourbridge on September 30; Cornbow Shopping Centre, Halesowen on October 1. Nearly 400 signed up for Stoptober in Dudley last year.

Temporary lights on a busy route

ROADWORKS on a busy road in Oldbury are likely to lead to traffic problems.

Causeway Green Road, near Birchley Island and junction two of the M5, will this week be subject to temporary 24 hour traffic lights as National Grid carry out work on gas pipes. The road will then be closed at this weekend too as work is carried out by Sandwell Council. Work is due to end by Monday.

MP unveils new school facilities

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin unveiled the new art studio and sports courts on Friday at Dormston School on Mill Bank.

He also congratulated the new headteacher Ben Stitchman, who started in September, after the percentage of students with five A*-C grades in GCSEs increased to 58 per cent from 40 per cent in 2012.

Aldi extension OK

PLANS to revamp the entrance of a Black Country supermarket have been approved.

Bosses at Aldi in Dudley have been granted permission for an extension to the building in Saltwells Road.

ADVERTISEMENT

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews

AS we speak I am contemplating taking a hammer to my mobile phone and smashing it to pieces. A primitive form of repair, I concede but yet again it has decided to wake me an hour earlier than I intended by deciding to do a spot of spontaneous photography.

Now you might well be asking why I simply don't switch the thing off for the night. But unfortunately, it doesn't respond terribly well to that, either. It usually sulks for about half an hour in the morning, locks itself up at inopportune moments, makes videos of me shouting at it, and fails to receive calls or text messages.

Four or five attempts to switch the thing on and off, a bit of light cursing, and it's usually right as rain. But to be honest, I can do without the hassle first thing in the morning.

I suppose I shouldn't really complain too much. I bought the thing about five years ago, which seems to be the shelf life of modern technology, and I only paid £30 for it, so I suppose I have got my money's worth. And today it did wait until dawn before it decided to disturb my sleep. On previous occasions it has decided to wake me at two or three in the morning, lighting up the room and making a not particularly pleasant record of my snoring.

Nevertheless, I suppose it is time to get a new one, but if I'm honest I will be a little sad to see the back of my battered pay-as-you-go Nokia. Partly, because I will have to learn how to operate a new phone, and yet I still haven't really got to grips with the old one. I've had the thing half a decade, and I still don't know what 'connectivity' or 'configurations' actually mean. And what will actually happen if I tinker with these buttons? Some things are best left alone.

But the real reason why I want to stick with my trusty Nokia as long as possible comes in the form of the new iPhone 6 , which comes out on Friday.

Now I suspect the majority of you know as little about this as I do, but apparently it is a little bigger than the iPhone 5, and will cost £549. And people have been camping out in London's Regent's Park just to be first in the queue.

How tragic is that? People spending a week living in a tent just so they can pay more than a monkey for a telephone. Which does pretty much the same thing as my thirty-quid Nokia.

Now there are no shortage of people who laugh at my phone. They tell me it is outdated, unreliable, and about as cool as Jeremy Clarkson. And of course, they're totally right.

But you know what? I own it. Whereas, with all the nerdy types coveting the new iPhone 6 and tying themselves up with long and expensive contracts, it is the phone that owns them.

More curious items in the Holly Hall collection

Jake with a bike once used by chimney sweep Joe Black

The future of commuting that failed — a Sinclair C5

Collection is on show to visitors

CHARLIE BENTON takes a look at Dudley man Jake Pearson's collection of curiosities and bric-a-brac

HE has everything from 14th century Arabic coins and one armed bandit slot machines to butcher's bikes and a Sinclair C5 in his personal collection which has taken five years to accumulate.

Now Jake Pearson is opening up his memorabilia of 1,000 different curios to members of the public to help raise funds for a good cause.

The72-year-old from Dudley decided to start collecting the items at his home on a whim.

He said: "I woke up one morning and recalled the old cast iron range fire grate we used to have when I was a child so I decided to go out and buy one.

"I found and bought one that was originally from Himley Hall and it all started from there really."

Mr Pearson said he collects things that he remembers from his childhood that he believes will strike a chord with others.

The items are stored in a dedicated 60ft veranda and extension outside of his Holly Hall home with all of the items on display.

"They have similar things at the Black Country Living Museum and such but why should people pay however much a ticket costs there when they can see better items here?" Jake said.

Hospital

Mr Pearson said people are welcome to view his items and if they want to they can make a donation which Mr Pearson said will go towards Russell's Hall Hospital cancer ward.

He said he is constantly on the lookout for memorabilia to add to his collection and more than anything would love to add a fairground ride as a garden decoration. He made a similar appeal for people to come along and view his collection a few years ago when it was smaller but he did not get the reaction he was hoping for.

Dudley collector Jake Pearson in his garage stuffed full of memorabilia

"My collection has grown since I last made the appeal and I have more interesting things for people to come along and see," he added. "I have quite a collection of bicycles now which I think are fantastic — I have an old butcher's bike, a baker's bike, a tandem bicycle in showroom condition and a penny farthing."

Although his wife is supportive of his collection, to a point, Jake said she mainly just 'gets on with it' as she respects his hobby. Between them they have three children, 14 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Mr Pearson said that he believes young children will love the collection as his own great-grandchildren often come round to see the items he has on show.

"They do like to mess around with the things so sometimes I do have to watch them with the rarer items," he said. "They do seem to enjoy the one armed bandit slot machines and will spend ages playing with them."

Although his expansive collection only started growing to the size it is now over the past few years Jake said he has always been fond of old things.

He said: "I have often collected or bought older things, I have even been through a period of owning classic cars which I loved."

Over the years hehas owned both a classic Aston Martin and Jaguar.

One of the most curious items he has is an old writing box from a Congregational Sunday school in Brierley Hill presented to a Mr J Holmes around 1807.

Information

Despite going to a number of Sunday schools in Brierley Hill as a child he does not recognise the school and would like some more information on the item.

He said he does not keep track of his spending as he prefers to think more of the viewing appeal and sentimental value of the items.

Although he has thought before about moving the collection from his home and setting up his own museum space, Jake said health issues have prevented him.

An ex-lorry driver, he said that he is not retired but that his failing eyesight has made it impossible to work.

He is proud of his collection, He said: "I've had people come in and they are gobsmacked and think what I have is brilliant. When they come in and they see all the things that I have they are so impressed and it absolutely makes my day.

"I just want people to come out and see these things so they don't go to waste and hopefully a bit of money can be raised for Russells Hall in the process."

People interested in viewing his collection should call him on (01384) 484309.

WEEK IN POLITICS

with Daniel Wainwright

THE National Health Service will be one of the main battlegrounds for the next election and the West Midlands is going to see some of the fiercest fights.

The scandal of Stafford Hospital has spread out to others, with more patients being taken to Wolverhampton and Walsall for care. The brand of Stafford has been tainted.

Politicians are using it as a stick to beat each other with. The Tories hold it up as an example of why Labour is no longer fit to oversee its own greatest achievement, the NHS itself, while Labour points to the downgrade of Stafford as an example of how the Tories can't be trusted with it.

Stafford itself is a marginal constituency. Conservative Jeremy Lefroy has been campaigning as hard as anyone could for the hospital, but could well be punished if his pleas are falling on deaf ears with his own party.

His Labour opponent Kate Godfrey has already told him to stand down and force a by-election to put Stafford at the top of the agenda. Amid the typical red v blue row, an alternative emerges.

Karen Howells, a founding member of the Support Stafford Hospital campaign, which has been camped out on the lawn of the site to fight the planned downgrade, is standing for the National Health Action party.

It might well be a one-issue party, but in Stafford it also happens that its one issue is the biggest one.

And it would be foolish to write the party off as a wasted vote. One of its founders is Dr Richard Taylor, who was elected as an independent in Wyre Forest not once but twice.

Neither Labour nor the Conservatives can afford to write Stafford off. There is still little between them in the opinion polls and the key marginals that changed hands in 2010 are the ones that will determine who gets to run the country from 2015.

Leave it to the voting public to decide how much MPs get paid and the answer would probably be 'nothing'.

So they were all prepared for grumbling over the recommended hike in their pay. Simply put, they don't deserve it at a time of austerity, particularly when other public servants have endured a pay freeze.

The problem is they didn't decide that they should get it. That was the verdict of the independent body set up to regulate their pay because so many of them couldn't be trusted not to treat the taxpayer like their own personal piggy bank.

The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority was created to stop them deciding what they should get. And now it's come to a decision they're being told to intervene and overrule it, which sort of defeats the whole object.

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Romantic folk could make a big myth-take

SCOTLAND is following a haunting and alluring myth, that of freedom from the yoke of English oppression. It is bred into them to believe that rule from England is a bad thing. They relish a fight for freedom.

Like the Pied Piper, Salmond is playing a magical tune, appealing to the deepest emotions of Scots.

Scotland enjoys no less freedom that anyone else in the UK and to claim that Utopia awaits them just by voting for independence is completely misleading. Voters need to be reminded that here in the real world, if it seems too good to be true, it usually is too good to be true.

First of all, their proposed currency would rely entirely on the state of the British economy, defying the definition of independence. Secondly, they would lose a freedom for which many in the world even now risk their lives — the freedom to live, work and travel unimpeded throughout the U.K. Thirdly, remember the tale of the Pied Piper. Once the door to the cave had closed behind them, an entire generation was lost forever.

Make no mistake, this referendum is not about freedom, it is purely and simply about elevating the importance of the leaders of the SNP.

If they do gain independence, they will soon find that running a country is vastly different to running a region within a country. Are they really up to the task? What happens if they are not? Only time would tell but by then it might be too late.

M CLIFF
Wall Heath

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

E-MAIL
Dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Cheaper car parks are answer

SO there is to be multi storey car parking in Tower Street, Dudley ,costing £2.5 million and yet a councillor says people aren't using the massive car park in Flood Street which is not a bus ride from the town centre, just a few minutes' walk, if that.

The councillor said, people aren't using Flood Street, yet for some reason he seems to think 250 spaces costing £2.5m will do wonders.

Now, here's a thought! How about having cheaper car parking and perhaps, just perhaps, people may return to a once-thriving town centre.

If it doesn't work at least they would have tried and, if it works, Dudley Council could avoid forking out public money on another white elephant.

Then again, councillors never ask for our thoughts, theirs are always good decisions.

P LOWE
Brierley Hill

Border posts needed to halt Scots invasion

WHEN the idea of Scottish independence came up, I felt quite upset at the very idea. But then ALL the politicians started kowtowing and ffering Scots all sorts of incentives to stay — I hate this idea.

I can understand the panic from Scottish MPs, they would obviously lose their jobs if Scotland voted to leave the UK. But the other MPs should not be bowing and scrapping, don't offer them money to stay. When India, Pakistan and others wanted to leave the British Empire, for some odd reason we agreed to pay them money every year to help their very poor people. After more than 50 years these people are still no better off, so do not pay the Scots either.

If they get all these extra concessions, then, England, Wales and Northern Island should get the same. If they leave, then all the students in England Wales and Northern Ireland should get free University educations. Portsmouth and Southampton could get Trident and ship building. We could in reality be better off. Then we should build a number of border posts so, when the Scots realised what a mistake they had made, we would not be inundated by thousands of them coming over the border.

C HOWELLS
Stourbridge

Hands off free help for elderly

I WAS furious to read of the proposals by a commission established by The King's Fund that the elderly should be stripped of the free TV licence, winter fuel allowance and free prescriptions.

I thought they were another Government-funded group but they are in fact a charity which offers, for a fee, to develop companies' capabilities. Recent positions offered on their web page quoted salaries between £38 to £46,000 – not bad for a charity.

So you would think for a charity who could offer the brain power to transform the performances of companies would have more to offer than suggest increasing public contributions to help the NHS, which they claim the old can afford.

This government would have adequate money to fund the NHS if they stopped immigration, stop overseas aid and stop fighting other countries' wars.

D BODLEY
Bilbrook

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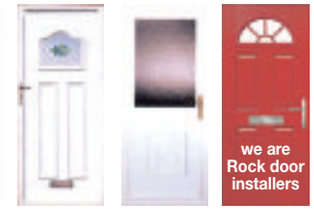

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Black Country Willy Wonka — a view inside the Blue Bird Factory

The Blue Bird building at Hunnington, near Halesowen, a major local employer

A candy cornucopia — just some of the company's products

Curator Clare Weston, who worked at the factory as a teenager, takes a look through the Blue Bird scrapbook

Sweet memories of the Blue Bird brand

LEMON drops, humbugs and chocolate-coated toffees, all boxed in decorative tins with the famous blue bird brand of confectionery.

Decades after the sweets have been peaten, the charm of the Blue Bird tins lives on with many now collector's items. Ranging from designs of British birds to Egyptian tombs, the tinsfrom the former Hunnington-based firm cause fascination.

As part of the Black Country Echoes Festival, the Black Country Living Museum held a presentation of its Blue Bird collection. Visitors heard about the factory's history and the community which revolved around it.

Former workers and their relatives also shared memories of their time at the firm, which began in 1898 when Harry Vincent set up as a confectioner. He built a factory off Bromsgrove Road, Hunnington, ands a garden village for workers in 1927. The factory had a canteen, concert hall and sports pavilion. The site closed in 1998.

MEMORY LANE

By Alex Ross

Clare Weston, museum curator, gave a talk on the collection. The 40-year-old worked as a sweet wrapper at the factory during university holidays in the summers of 1993 and 1994. She said: "When I was there the place was obviously a much smaller operation but there were still around 100 people still working at the site. It was the hardest work I have ever done, working 8am to 4pm and then till 6pm overtime, on our feet all day at the end of the production line. But there was a sense of community and history."

Brenda Osbourn, 68, worked at the factory on and off between 1967 and 1991 after moving into one of the houses built for workers. She still lives there today. Her husband Gerald worked as a caretaker from the age of 14 to 61, while his father Leonard Osbourn was a sugar boiler at the factory. She said: "People were very proud to have worked for the family business."

Joan Hughes worked in the offices from 1964 to 1966 after leaving college in Dudley. She said: "When I was there the firm began modernising and was looking into TV advertising."

Mrs Hughes remembers bus loads of workers being taken to the factory from Dudley.

Historian Julian Hunt, President of Romsley and Hunnington History Society, believes up to 500 people worked at the factory in its heyday.

He said: "The company's tins were iconic. They were designed very carefully to be recognised. A lot of time and effort would have been spent on them, and it paid off. Wholesalers and retailers gained confidence in the brand and gave Blue Bird products prominence in their displays."

The collection of Blue Bird tins and the Harry Vincent Ltd archives were saved by Hull Museum when former parent company Needlers closed down. They were transferred to the Black Country Museum in 2007.

Former Blue Bird toffee maker Christopher Guest, from Hunnington, and former Blue Bird office worker Joan Hughes

'No other family should have to go through this'

A GRIEVING mother has called for more to be done to help addicts who are leaving prison to make sure they don't go back to drugs.

Beverley Bailey was speaking at Smethwick Council House after the inquest into the death of her son, Jason, the day after he was released from prison. The 34-year-old died at his mother's home in Hedgefield Grove, Halesowen, on June 4 after overdosing on heroin.

Mrs Bailey said her son was released from prison following a 10-week stint for shop theft as having no fixed abode, and with around £100 he had earned from working while in prison.

Concerns

She said: "If a known heroin addict is released onto the streets with nowhere to go and £100 in his pocket, it's not rocket science to work out what he's going to do with the money."

She said she wanted to make people aware of the lack of support given to drug addicts when they are released from prison, while Mr Robin Balmain, senior coroner for the Black Country, said he would write to the prison service to express his concerns.

Mrs Bailey – a former prison officer – has written to her MP, James Morris, about her son's case. She said: "If one good thing can come from this then it is that another family doesn't have to go through what we have had to."

She told the inquest that she had been to visit her son a week before his release to tell him he was not allowed back to his parents' house. However, when Mr Bailey was released on June 3 he arrived at her house later that day, but she told him to go away. He came back half an hour later and was sobbing so she let him in.

"I told him if he was going to live herehe was going to do as I say and he had to ask to do everything except flush the toilet," she said.

Jason Bailey — his mother says more must be done to help addicts

"We spent a wonderful afternoon in the garden. It was like we had our son back. He went to bed and I went upstairs around about midnight and his door was wide open and his television was on. He never used to leave his door open so I thought he was finally being open with us."

She found him lying on the floor and called the ambulance. She said ambulance staff found her son with a syringe still in his leg.

Mr Balmain said Mr Bailey had 579 microgrammes of morphine, derived from heroin and methadone, per litre of blood. He recorded the cause of death as heroin and morphine toxicity.

He added: "This is a tragedy that I am seeing all too often. I do take on board what this young man's mother has told me about the situation on release from prison, which seems to me to be a recipe for disaster. I have the authority to bring these matters to the attention of the relevant authorities and I propose to write to the prison service."

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30th	XMAS AT HAMPTON COURT & 3 COURSE LUNCH	£59.50	£57.50
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Club prepares for its real ale festival

MORE than 1,000 pints will be sunk by drinkers this weekend as part of a beer festival.

Tipton Conservative Club is holding its second beer festival of the year.

Angela and Martin Mullany took over the club in December and are holding the festival to coincide with the annual Black Country Canal Festival, also taking place this weekend.

The beer festival will kick off on Friday evening and run straight through until Sunday night. The club has nine-gallon firkins of 13 different real ales and two ciders to get through.

Mrs Mullany said: "This is the second festival we have held this year and we are hoping this one will be even more successful than the last."

Pair in court after car is dismantled

TWO men have been charged with receiving stolen goods after a car stolen from outside a club in Dudley was found dismantled at a Willenhall lock up.

A Skoda Octavia was stolen from the entrance of the rifle club in Dudley in February. Police discovered the vehicle in parts a couple of weeks later at a unit on Ezekiel Lane, Short Heath. Two men were arrested on suspicion of receiving stolen goods.

Tony Cook, aged 30, of Stroud Avenue, Willenhall, and 29-year-old Gregory Taylor, of Spills Meadow, Upper Gornal, were each charged with three counts of receiving stolen goods and are due to appear before Wolverhampton magistrates on Wednesday.

Family insist stabbing attack was predictable

RELATIVES of Halesowen schoolgirl Christina Edkins, who was killed in a random attack by a paranoid schizophrenic, have spoken out following a report which identified failings by the police, prison service and NHS.

By Mark Andrews

Christina, 16, was stabbed on a bus in Birmingham by Philip Simelane while she was on her way to Leasowes High School in March 2013.

The report by Birmingham CrossCity Clinical Commissioning Group said her death could have been prevented were it not for 'missed opportunities' by the authorities.

Simelane, 23, was sentenced to an indeterminate hospital order after pleading guilty to manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. He had a history of mental illness but had been released unsupervised from prison three months before the attack.

Christina's great-uncle Chris Melia welcomed the publication of the report by Dr Alison Reed, which made 51 recommendations calling for improved sharing of mental health information between agencies. However, he said the family disagreed with Dr Reed's conclusion that nobody could have predicted the random attack on Christina, which took place on a bus in Hagley Road, Edgbaston.

"The report said that Christina's death was preventable but not predictable, but we believe it was also predictable, we believe that very strongly," he said.

In a statement, Christina's family added: "The report clearly shows that long-term failings by members of the police, prison service and medical staff effectively to deal with and treat Philip Simelane during 11 years of a developing mental illness, culminated in a series of mismanaged opportunities throughout the 14 months leading up to Christina's death on a bus in Birmingham."

Mr Melia added that Simelane's mother had called police 21 times in the months leading up to the attack because of her son.

"There were lots of other people who said how gravely ill this chap was but somehow they didn't seem to find it necessary to do anything," said Mr Melia. "He had assaulted a police officer and he had assaulted his mother a number of times. He said he was going to stab and kill her. There are so many missed opportunities it's unbelievable."

GOLDbury celebrates its Games heroes

Golden girl Jodie Stimpson with fellow Oldbury sports stars Mikail Huggins, Jaswant Shergill and Chinu

IT is not very often you get three Commonwealth Games winners from one town. So when Oldbury was turned into GOLDbury for the day to mark the achievements of the area's athletes, hundreds of people turned out to celebrate.

The town centre was transformed into a mini sports arena, a bus stop was sprayed gold and road signs renamed in honour of their achievements.

Triathlete Jodie Stimpson, who bagged two gold medals at the Games in Glasgow, took centre stage along with fellow gold winner guide runner Mikail Huggins amd bronze-medal winning wrestler Chinu.

They were also celebrating the success of weightlifter Jaswant Shergill who also hails from Oldbury and set a personal best at the games.

And all four said they were overwhelmed by the number of people who had turned out to salute them at the weekend.

Oldbury-born Jodie said: "It's been breathtaking. I didn't expect that amount of people to come out and see us.

"It meant such a lot and I was very humbled by it. It seems the whole of Sandwell has backed us.

"I hope all of us who took part in the Commonwealth Games have gone on to inspire a new generation of athletes and that there will be lots of young Sandwell stars among them."

Jodie, who is aged 25 and a former Oldbury Swimming and Triathlon Club member, won gold medals in the solo and mixed triathlon this summer.

Jobs set to go as closure is announced

JOBS are being axed as aerospace firm Timken revealed it will shut its factory in Wolverhampton.

The company, which manufactures bearings, plans to close its site in Upper Villiers Street, Blakenhall, by the end of 2015 shedding 84 jobs under plans announced by the US-based firm.

Bosses said that the number of orders it was receiving was dwindling because it predominantly supplied parts for older aircraft. But it will continue to honour its current orders and could take on new work from existing customers until the factory closes next year.

It is a blow to the city which has been promoting itself as a specialist base for the aerospace industry. It comes after Caterpillar-run Turner Powertrain Systems on Racecourse Road, Dunstall, announced it was to axe more than 200 jobs.

Plant manager Todd Laquerre said: "It is always unfortunate and obviously we announce this with a heavy heart but our production focus has narrowed to a niche of legacy aerospace bearings leaving us with an inability to grow.

"We are speaking with staff and the unions. We will honour all existing orders and continue to work with the customers to meet their needs."

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COMPETITION

CLOTHES Show Live, in association with ALCATEL ONETOUCH, will return to Birmingham's NEC Birmingham this December to offer a unique fashion experience.

With catwalk shows, makeovers, manicures, beauty demonstrations and style advice, the shopping haven makes for the perfect day out.

Whether you're looking to update your wardrobe, fuel inspiration for a career in fashion, or meet your favourite celebrities and industry icons, prepare to immerse yourself in the ultimate fashion festival.

Affordable

Open from December 5-9, Clothes Show Live is sure to provide something for everyone as it displays home designer and boutique collections, emerging designers, next generation talent, vintage finds and affordable fashion. With an endless Beauty Hall filled with gift bags and goodies, you can enjoy the ultimate shopping spree.

And you could be there for free. Organisers have teamed up with the Chronicle series to offer 90 pairs of tickets for the opening day of the show – Friday, December 5.

Each year the show welcomes a host of leading names in fashion, and this year's fashion experts are made up of Hilary Alexander OBE, Dame Zandra Rhodes, Henry Holland, and the Clothes Show's original presenter Caryn Franklin MBE.

Your favourite celebs including stars from the world of music and reality TV will be returning to the show. Don't miss Rick Edwards and Neon Jungle as well as your favourites from the cast of TOWIE, Lauren Goodger and Amy Childs, along with the Made in Chelsea stars Jamie Laing and Millie Mackintosh ...and many more!

Splash of colour and plenty of choice of catwalk shows

Take time to relax and pamper yourself at one of the many hair and beauty stations. With tutorials and make-over transformations, it could be time to discover a whole new you! Get the latest tips, tricks and inside knowledge from industry experts.

The event's highlight is the award-winning ALCATEL ONETOUCH Fashion Theatre, which this year plays homage to the Fashion Capital of 2013, New York! Every ticket includes a dedicated seat to be mesmerised by the vibes of the Big Apple for the world's largest catwalk performance. For more information and tickets go to clothesshowlive.com

TO ENTER

Simply answer the following question

Where is the fashion capital of 2013?

Send entries to Clothes Show competition, Chronicles (editorial) 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

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COMMERCIAL FEATURE

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The home improvement market is changing and the demand for more choice in colour and suitability of PVC-U doors and windows is growing. Fashionable additions such as orangeries are increasingly desirable, as more people look for ways to improve their home.

Established since 1994, Tipton Windows & Conservatories Ltd, trading as Choices , believe that the latest trends are important, but quality products and exceptional service will always be paramount, which this family run business have proven over two decades.

Situated on Sedgley Road West in Tipton, the founder and company Managing Director Nathan Beddows started the business from scratch at the early age of 19 working out of the very same premises as he does today, He explains his passion:

"I cannot stress enough how much pride we take in every window, door, conservatory, orangery we manufacture and install."

With its roots in manufacturing, the business started more than 20 years ago, and right from the very start an emphasis has been placed on supplying only the finest and most energy-efficient products, but still remaining affordable.

"Our commitment extends beyond the manufacturing process to the design and installation of doors, windows, conservatories and other home improvement services," explains Nathan.

"For some customers we supply new windows and doors, for others we provide a complete home improvement service from building extensions and fitting kitchens, to designing and installing conservatories and more recently Orangeries," says Nathan.

One tremendously satisfied customer is Rick Houghton. Having being recommended to Choices Windows by colleagues at work he employed them to carry out extensive work at his home, he is keen to share his experiences and commend the team involved.

"Every stage of the process was excellently planned and we received nothing but the best service from start to finish. The tradesmen were outstanding and we were so impressed that we handed over our keys and went on holiday whilst the work was being carried out."

Rick and his family were absolutely thrilled and utterly delighted with the results on their return.

"We are so grateful to Nathan and his team for transforming our home into something we could only have dreamed of," remarked Rick.

Keen to keep ahead in the style stakes, Nathan is ever aware of the latest designs, materials and colours on offer, and strives to make these available to his customers.

"Many people are now opting for stylish coloured PVC-U, influenced by timeless muted 'National Trust' tones. Sage green, gun metal grey and cream are all becoming very fashionable alongside the traditional clean bright white," explains Nathan.

Fitting new PVC-U windows can be a good choice for the environment as well as for your home. Replacing dated double glazing can help save money on heating bills and reduce the carbon footprint of a residence.

"We offer A-rated energy-efficient windows and doors which can help save up to £250 from heating bills in the first year alone. They not only reflect heat back into the house, but also retain heat from solar gain," remarks Nathan.

"As a company we pride ourselves on giving old fashioned value for money and excellent service, we can undertake the majority of jobs and because we manufacture in house at our premises unlike the majority of our local competitors it enables us to have full control so we can manage your project from start to completion ensuring your experience is stress free".

"After many years in the Double glazing business we have seen a lot of competitors come and go, unfortunately leaving many customers without any warranty, after parting with their hard earned cash. Any customer who is considering having any home improvements should choose carefully and do their homework on the company they are considering, ensure if you part with money upfront it is protected by a Fensa approved deposit indemnity scheme, ask to visit previous customers but most importantly don't be fooled by the salesmen's tactics of a tempting "sign on the night low price offer" that the double glazing industry is notorious for "advises Nathan.

The old sayings are always the best - after a low price is long forgotten, poor quality long remains".

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Figures show violence rising across borough

THE number of violent attacks in Dudley has risen, according to new figures, with police revealing a surge reports of domestic violence.

Between April 1 and June 30 this year, there were 436 violent assaults, leaving people injured, across the borough.

Officers say the amount is higher than the force target of no more than 390 cases.

It made up 12 per cent of the total number of crimes recorded in the borough during the three months – which was 3,621. That compared to 371 in the same period last year and 342 the year before.

Only in 2011 was the figure similar, when it was 431. As well as violent crime during this year's period, police were called to 566 cases of criminal damage, 196 burglaries and 51 robberies.

West Midlands Police say the increase in 'violence with injury' cases could be down to more people reporting domestic violence, which falls into the same category.

Initiatives

But the force says they are working to drive down the number of violence attacks in the borough.

Among the initiatives include visiting pubs and clubs in a bid to combat any potential criminality.

They have also struck up a partnership with teams of volunteers, known as street pastors, who help revellers on nights out.

Foundry firm wants to attract more youngsters

A BLACK Country foundry may take on an extra shift because of growing demand for its high quality castings.

By John Corser

Joint managing director of family-run Thomas Dudley, Martin Dudley, said the company was currently taking on nine new people in management to gear up for the move.

"We are getting busier and busier and it looks like by November we may have to put an extra shift on to keep up," said Mr Dudley.

Trained

He said the new managers, including a foundry manager, needed to be trained up ready for then.

"We are not taking on any new shop floor staff immediately, but if we are still as busy as we think we are going to be then we will be recruiting and taking on double figures," he added.

People interested in the management posts can find details on the company website www.thomasdudley.co.uk.

The company in Birmingham New Road has just invested £60,000 to create a new quality suite.

Mr Dudley said the old facilities had been outdated and the new laboratory and offices had been equipped with new measuring equipment.

Customer services manager Lorraine Dale, who has just marked 40 years service with the company, was invited to perform the official opening on August 29.

"We have been investing in plant, equipment and people and our latest investment was in improving quality. We have re-arranged office space to create the new suite.

"When customers now come in we have got a first class suite for them to see what we do," explained Mr Dudley.

The next development at the foundry will be the opening of a suite which will enable the company to bring in visiting parties, particularly from local schools.

"The visitor suite will be off our meeting rooms with a walkway where people can view the foundry from a safe distance.

Castings

"We hope to have it open within the next three months," added Mr Dudley.

The company, which also has a plastics moulding division, has been manufacturing iron castings since 1920.

It hopes to encourage more youngsters to think about careers in engineering and is backing a new scheme called Careers in the Classroom.

True blue Margot turns pink for charity

Stourbridge MP Margot James will be in the pink for breast cancer awareness next month

STOURBRIDGE MP Margot James has taken part in an event for the Breast Cancer Campaign by wearing pink for the charity's flagship fundraising day.

She joined several other MPs as part of the charity's annual wear it pink event in Parliament. The charity, which raises awareness and money for breast cancer research, is encouraging people to wear pink on October 24, whether to work or school, as part of the campaign.

The Conservative MP said: "Every year in the UK over 50,000 women and around 350 men are diagnosed with breast cancer. The Breast Cancer Campaign does excellent work funding the vital research that saves and improves lives, giving people quicker diagnoses and more effective treatments. I hope people will join me by wearing pink on Friday, October 24, and show support for breast cancer research."

For more information or to register for a fundraising pack visit www.wearitpink.org website.

Some knights to remember at the game fair

THE highlight of many rural sporting enthusiast's calendar, the Midland Game Fair is back this weekend at Weston Park bringing lots of family entertainment alongside an array of finals in many disciplines, particularly shooting.

This year visitors to the event celebrating country life and held on the Shropshire-Staffordshire border near Shifnal can thrill to a spectacular show by medieval jousters the Knights of Middle England.

They can also witness the Shetland Pony Grand National, the Essex Dog Display Team in action, as well as falconry and heavy horses displays.

Anglers are catered for in the Fishing Village, falconers in the Falconry Village and dog lovers can enjoy the the World Series Gundog Championship Final and terrier and lurcher events.

Stalls

There will also be lots of stalls selling country clothes and accessories.

For more information on the Midland Game Fair this Saturday and Sunday visit www.midlandgamefair.co.uk website or join their Facebook page.

Tickets are £20 on the day and free for each under-16 accompanying an adult.

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Rudy's boys rock Rep with laughter

Rudy's Rare Records, Birmingham Rep

LENNY Henry may have given up stand-up comedy for acting but there are plenty of laughs in this warm-hearted story about three generations of the same family working in a struggling Handsworth record shop.

Dudley-born Henry and writer Danny Robins worked together on four series of Rudy's Rare Records on BBC Radio 4 and have finally, and triumphantly, turned the story into a joyous and exuberant play. It won a standing ovation at the Rep.

The clash between father and son has long been a rich source for drama and comedy, think Steptoe & Son. Despite the bickering, one feels the affection from Lenny Henry's divorcee son and failed actor Adam who has come home to look after his elderly dad Rudy and his chaotic vinyl emporium.

Their ongoing war of words allows the script to be peppered with dozens of choice one-liners. These include Rudy's dismissal of golf as "cricket for people who can't run" and Adam telling his father: "I'm not taking parenting advice from a man who blu-tacked an ashtray onto my pram."

Lenny Henry is in full-on loveable mode as the sarcastic yet dutiful son, eyes rolling in exasperation as his father berates the developers who want to demolish his shop over their 'genital friction' (gentrification) of the area.

Larrington Walker is superb as Rudy, the hip-swiveling pensioner with a liking for tall tales, buxom ladies, Guinness and colourful Jamaican cussing. He meets his match in old pal Clifton (Jeffery Kissoon relishing his role) and girlfriend laundrette boss Doreen (Lorna Gayle) who insists she is for more than "naughtiness and clean underpants." Jovian Wade, as Rudy's rapping grandson, and Natasha Godfrey, as Birmingham's only Caribbean goth, give solid support.

Lenny Henry and Natasha Godfrey in Rudy's Rare Records at Birmingham Rep, a warm-hearted comedy set in a Handsworth record shop

The poignant scene in which three generations join in singing A Change Is Gonna Come was pure magic — the other lump in the throat moment being when Clifton tells Rudy when he says son Adam has never liked him: "He doesn't like you, he loves you."

The first act is a little long at 90 minutes and the second is mostly given over to musical performances during a 'Rudestock' reggae benefit concert for the shop. But if you have nostalgia for proper record shops and classic reggae tunes from the 1960s and 70s, Rudy's message is for you.

It continues at Birmingham Rep until Saturday, September 20.

Leon Burakowski

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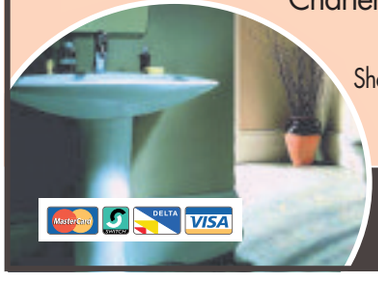

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Fixer sent to prison after renting Black Country houses for drug gang

A MAN who rented houses so a drug gang could turn them into cannabis factories, has been jailed.

Mazhar Pathan used a false name, forged documents and cash provided by the gang when dealing with landlords, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. Houses involved in the racket included properties at Church Street, Halesowen and Dudley Road, Warley, as well as premises in Wolverhampton and Derby.

Pathan, of Bescot Road, Walsall, who had no previous convictions, pleaded guilty to being concerned in the production of cannabis and money laundering . He was jailed for two years and eight months.

Mr Mark Phillips, prosecuting, revealed: "The production at the four properties involved the growing of up to 800 plants with a potential crop of 44 kilograms of skunk cannabis."

The 28-year-old 'fixer,' using the name Mohammed Ali, paid five months of the £500-a-month rent in advance on the Heath Town address in August 2012. Police found it had been converted into a drug factory with 21 heat lamps and 70 plants when it was raided.

The defendant forked out £1,100 cash in May 2013 to rent the property in Halesowen which had 152 plants under cultivation in three rooms when officers swooped three months later. A Vietnamese 'gardener' tending the crop was jailed for 18 months.

The slip that cost Pathan his liberty involved the premises in Warley which had been transformed into a 312-plant cannabis factory. When an attempt was made to break into the property – possibly made by a rival gang – he reported the suspected burglary to police using his own mobile phone.

Mr Jasvir Mann, defending, said Pathan had been in need of cash having taken out a loan to build an extension at his home but then was made redundant. Mr Mann, added: "He found himself in a fix and acted wholly out of character. The offence was financially driven. He was being paid up to £3,000 to rent the property but had nothing to do with the growing of the cannabis."

Recorder Geoffrey Kelly told him: "You had a crucial role. The criminal enterprise could not have operated without the properties provided by you."

Picnic marks year of scheme

FAMILIES of children with disabilities from across the West Midlands gathered to mark a first anniversary of a project helping to provide respite.

Barnardo's Midlands Overnight Short Breaks service provides children with disabilities and their families regular, planned overnight short breaks. Bosses say it gives youngsters the chance to enjoy time away from home, try new activities and make new friends.

A picnic to celebrate the service's first year anniversary was held at Haden Hill Park. Spokeswoman Stephanie Cummins said: "Our first year has been a great success and we have work with around 90 children and their families." To find out more about the service call 0121 550 1222.

A-maize-ing poppy tribute

A stunning aerial shot of Sandwell Valley's maize maze

IT is a spectacular tribute to those who died in the First World War.

Nine acres of winding hedged passageways shaped into a poppy, as seen from the air in this stunning picture.

The bird's eye view of the attraction was revealed by Sandwell Council which is urging more families to visit the new maize maze.

Situated at Forge Mill Farm, the maze opened last month and is the first of its kind in Sandwell.

Mayor

It was shaped as a poppy to commemorate the start of the Great War's hundredth anniversary this year.

The attraction was opened by Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Derek Rowley.

He said: "It is a fantastic win-win idea.

"The kids can enjoy it over the summer and then the animals at the farm will be fed from it later in the year."

Visitors are advised to allow an hour and a half to complete the maze. It is open daily from 10am to 4.30pm, with last admission at 3.30pm.

Entry to Forge Mill Farm is free. Admission to the maze is £3 for adults and £1.50 for children and over 60s. Family tickets are also available.

Run is all set to be best yet

A TOTAL of more than 17,000 runners have signed up to take the start line at a major road race, as organisers predict a record turnout.

Organisers say the Bupa Great Birmingham Run is odds on to the biggest in the half marathon's seven year history.

Double Commonwealth gold medal winner Jodie Stimpson will be an official starter. The 25-year-old from Oldbury, who won both individual and team triathlon golds for England at the Glasgow games, will be at the start line to see off those taking part.

Thousands have already pledged to take part in the 13.1 mile run on October 19, including a record number of entries for both the Business Challenge and Junior and Mini races.

Organisers hope to beat the record 20,000 runners who took part in the 2013 run. Although entries for the 2014 run have been increased to 22,000, organisers are advising would-be entrants to sign up now to avoid disappointment.

The Bupa Great Birmingham Run is the second biggest half marathon in the UK. Visit www.greatrun.org/birmingham for details.

More than 1,300 stray dogs are put down over a year

MORE than 1,300 stray and abandoned dogs were put down across the West Midlands in 12 months.

The annual Dogs Trust report has revealed 1,396 animals picked up by councils in the region were destroyed between April 2013 and March 2014.

After being collected by council wardens across the Black Country and Staffordshire they are usually handed over to kennels who provide care.

Dogs which are in poorly condition or have behavioural difficulties face being put down, although legally those which are not collected within seven days can be destroyed.

Neighbour

The statistics, released as part of a Stray Dogs Survey carried out by Dogs Trust, show there was a fall of abandoned and stray animals in the West Midlands from 19,195 the year before to 18,798. This matches with a national decrease from 111,986 to 110,675.

Despite this, 31 per cent of dog owners are still losing their dog at least once in the animal's lifetime.

The survey found 64 per cent do not know who is responsible for caring for strays with 42 per cent saying they would get in touch with a family member or neighbour rather than a council.

Clarissa Baldwin OBE, chief executive of the Dogs Trust, said: "The number of instances of straying on our streets is declining but we still have a significant job to do when it comes to raising awareness about responsible dog ownership.

"Owners are unsure of who to reach out to and how much time they have to recover their dog should he or she go missing."

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environment and culture at Dudley Council, said: "Stray dogs found by Dudley Council remain in our care for seven days and if owners do not come forward in this time the dogs are relocated to City Dogs in Stoke on Trent.

"City Dogs then takes decisions on issues such as re-homing and veterinary care for the dogs."

Women held in drugs raid

A WOMAN from Wordsley has been arrested in a police crackdown on drugs in the borough.

Officers swooped on High Street, Brierley Hill, as part of investigations last week.

West Midlands Police said the raid had been executed following concerns from raised by local residents.

Dangerous

A 21-year-old woman from Wordsley was arrested on suspicion of supplying drugs and obstructing a officer.

Police also arrested a 25-year-old man on suspicion of conspiracy to supply drugs, possession with intent to supply and possessing a dangerous dog.

A quantity of drugs and a dog were seized during the police operation.

100-mile bike ride to mark war centenary raises £1,300

A FIVE-MAN team, including three firefighters, have cycled more than 100 miles – one for every year since the outbreak of the First World War.

By Charlie Benton

Along for the ride was 57-year-old Dudley watch commander Brian Morris, from Gornal.

He was joined by 41-year-old fellow firefighter Matthew Wagstaff, from Stourbridge, 42-year-old welder Leigh Blandford, from Wordsley, 68-year-old retired BT engineer Ivan Steadman, also from Wordsley, and David Antcliff, 41, from Grosvenor Road, Gornal.

Mr Antcliff, , who has been a fireman for 22 years, said: "We started in Dudley and rode to Spitfire Island in Castle Vale.

Memorial

"Then on to Alrewas War Memorial and Cannock Chase before heading back to Dudley.

"We started at half six in the morning and we were in the pub celebrating by half three in the afternoon, so all in all, I would say it took us around nine hours to complete the ride."

The ride was being held in aid of the Chris Westwood Charity, which helps children with disabilities and it has raised around £1,300 for them.

A similar charity ride is already being planned for next year.

Anyone who wants to donate in support of the riders can do so at www.everyclick.com/ride-red100 website.

Housing scheme gets green light

A HOUSING development in Stourbridge has been given the go-ahead.

Dudley Council will build eight two-bedroom apartments on disused land in Norfolk Road, Wollaston, to provide supported housing.

Work is likely to start on site later this year after planning permission was granted for the scheme which is expected to be completed in the summer 2015.

Plans for a second scheme at another former council depot at The Walk in Sedgley will be determined later this month. If approved, this will provide six two-bedroom apartments and three two-bedroom houses.

The council is investing £2m to develop both schemes.

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Dance delight as Birmingham Royal Ballet is returning home

A REVIVAL of David Bintley's gothic fairy tale Beauty and the Beast and three one-act ballets, each touched by war, feature in the Birmingham Royal Ballet's autumn programme from next week.

BRB will return home to the Birmingham Hippodrome stage from 30 September to 11 October. First up, until October 4, will be BRB artistic director David Bintley's ever-popular Beauty and the Beast.

That will be followed, from October 8 to 11, by Shadows of War, a triple bill of ballets which have a connection with war. It features Kenneth MacMillan's La Fin du jour, which captures the glamorous 'la plage' lifestyle enjoyed by bright young things in the 1920s and 30s until brought to an end by the Second World War. Robert Helpmann's 1944 Miracle in the Gorbals was a great leap forward for British ballet when it dispensed with all the glamour of traditional ballets, replacing it with a gritty realism.

Belle met — scene from Beauty and the Beast

Scottish

Bintley's Flowers of the Forest is a ballet in two parts set to music by Malcolm Arnold and Benjamin Britten. It takes its title from the ballad to Scottish youth slain on Flodden Field in the war between England and Scotland. Four Scottish Dances presents a picture postcard view of Scotland whilst Scottish Ballad strikes a serious note.

The BRB will then be back at the Hippodrome with their Christmas treat for the Midlands, Sir Peter Wright's The Nutcracker from November 28 to December 13.

There is also ballet at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre this week when English Youth Ballet give dozens of aspiring young dancers from the West Midlands the chance to pirouette alongside professional principals in a traditional production of The Sleeping Beauty. More than 100 youngsters aged from eight to 18 will join the eight professionals in this opulent staging of a much-loved ballet tomorrow evening and twice on Saturday, matinee and evening.

A 'Zulu ballet' can be seen at Birmingham Symphony Hall on Friday, October 3, when the harmonies of South African vocal group Ladysmith Black Mambazo merge with Mark Baldwin's choreography blending Zulu traditions with ballet and contemporary dance. Inala is a one night only performance by 18 dancers and singers. There is more dance, at Birmingham Town Hall, on October 8 when Paco Pena brings his flamenco company to the venue for a production entitled Requiem for the Earth.

The revamped revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Cats continues at Birmingham Hippodrome until September 27 and adult's only puppet musical Avenue Q continues at the New Alexandra Theatre to Saturday, followed by new 1970s jukebox musical Blockbuster from Tuesday to Saturday, featuring Paul Nicholas and Suzanne Shaw.

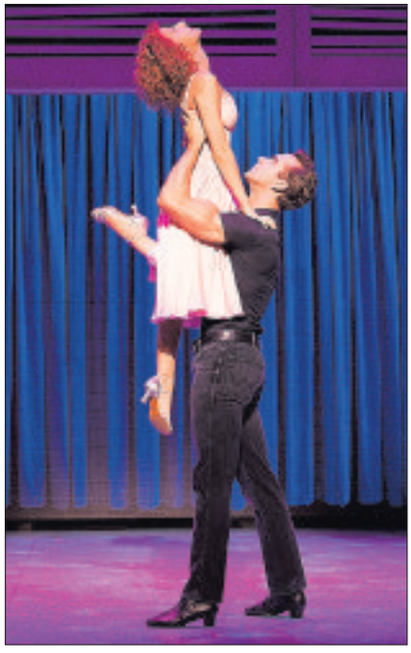
Uplifting, nostalgic romance

FANS of classic 1980s movie Dirty Dancing will be having the time of their lives when the uplifting tale about romance against the odds is staged at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre for nearly three weeks.

The latest production of the show, which was a West End hit, is at the Lichfield Street venue from Tuesday, September 23, until Saturday, October 11.

Set in an upstate New York holiday resort during the 1960s, it tells of the love between Baby and Johnny, a young holidaymaker and the resort dance instructor, played in the movie by Jennifer Grey and Patrick Swayze.

Featuring such 1960s tunes as Do You Love Me and Hey Baby, this touring production has Gareth Bailey as Johnny Castle and Roseanna Frascona as Frances 'Baby' Houseman and recreates that most famous movie dancefloor moment... the lift.



Nobody puts Baby in a corner — a scene from Dirty Dancing

Riverdance is to celebrate 20 years

IT'S been 20 years since Riverdance, the spectacular Irish phenomena, first burst onto the scene when an excerpt was performed during the Eurovision Song Contest in Dublin.

The show mixing traditional Irish dance with tap and a whole lot more went on to achieve global success. It has been seen by more than 2.9 million people across the UK and by TV audiences in excess of 2 billion.

The cast includes All-Ireland, Great Britain, All-Scotland, and North American Irish dance champion Andrew O'Reilly.

Riverdance 2014 will be performed from Tuesday to Thursday at the new-look NIA in Birmingham city centre. Tickets are £46.50. Call 0844 3388000.

The Kite Runner adapted for stage

KHALED Hosseini's haunting Afghan tale, The Kite Runner, has been adapted for the stage and is at Birmingham Rep September 22 to October 4.

At the Rep's The Studio Lisa Dwan performs the Samuel Beckett trilogy, Not I, Footfall, Rockaby, until Saturday.

Lyngo Theatre present children's fairy tale Jack and the Beanstalk at The Rep's Door with performances on Saturday morning and afternoon.

A new comedy drama about a British Sikh family, Happy Birthday Sunita, is being performed at Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday.

Cor baby it's really he at the Robin 2

OTWAY and Barrett, who found fame in the 1970s with their debut album John Otway and Wild Willy Barrett, will play Bilston's Robin 2 on Sunday. The record, produced by The Who guitarist Pete Townshend, was released in 1976 and spawned hit single Really Free, which reached the dizzy heights of 27 on the chart a year later.

Rock and Roll's Greatest Failure — Otway the Movie was released last year with the help of his fiercely dedicated fan base, who funded the project, and has now made it to DVD. To celebrate Otway returns to the stage with his original songwriting partner. Advance tickets are £12.50 or £15 on the door. Call 01902 401211 or visit therobin.co.uk

Singers are on the comeback trail

PICK of the gigs this week includes the return of singer-songwriter Beverley Craven at the MAC in Edgbaston tonight as part of a tour to mark release of new album Change of Heart.

Former frontman of goth gods The Mission, Wayne Hussey, has a solo show at the Robin 2 in Bilston on Monday.

That's the same night that alt-J rock the Civic Hall at Wolverhampton with their new album This Is All Yours.

Soul, hip hop and rap fans will be heading over to Birmingham's O2 Academy on Tuesday for the return of Ms Lauryn Hill, as the former Fugee starts a comeback.

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CHOICE

Jenna Coleman

Doctor Who, BBC 1, 7.30pm
The Time Lord has never shied away from a challenge – in fact, he's more likely than most to face them head-on. So when he's offered the chance to have a go at breaking into the most dangerous bank in the cosmos, he grabs it with both hands – after all, such opportunities don't come every day, even for centuries-old adventurers. The Doctor won't be alone during the task – lending a hand will be a beautiful shape-shifter, a cyber-augmented gamer and, of course, trusty sidekick Clara. And they will have to have all their wits about them if they're to overcome the bank's deadly security as well as the fearsome Teller – a powerful creature that can detect guilt. Sci-fi drama, starring Peter Capaldi and Jenna Coleman, with a guest appearance by Keeley Hawes.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Bargain Hunt. **2.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **3.00** Escape to the Country. **4.00** Final Score. **5.10** Formula 1: Singapore Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights. Suzi Perry presents action from the Singapore Grand Prix qualifying session at the Marina Bay Street Circuit, where the 14th round of the season takes place.

6.25 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.40 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong challenges famous contestants from children's TV. The four pairs are former Play School presenters Johnny Ball and Carol Chell, kids' game show hosts Dave Benson-Phillips and Pat Sharp, Horrible Histories stars Jim Howick and Ben Wilibond and PC Plum and Miss Hoolie from Balamory – otherwise known as actors Andrew Agnew and Julie Wilson Nimmo. Richard Osman has all the answers.

7.30 Doctor Who. The Time Lord is given a task he cannot refuse – to steal from the most dangerous bank in the cosmos – bringing him face to face with a creature that can detect a person's guilt.

8.20 The National Lottery: In It to Win It. Dale Winton hosts the quiz in which five contestants answer questions to scoop a big cash prize. Includes the Lotto and Thunderball draws, with Gaby Roslin.

9.10 Casualty. Connie's old boss Andrea returns to the ED and risks a boy's life to conceal her secret. Lofty worries about a patient's mental health and Dixie is jealous of Tamzin and Jeff.

10.00 BBC News; Weather.

10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, which included West Ham United v Liverpool at Upton Park and Aston Villa v Arsenal at Villa Park.

11.40 The Football League Show. Manish Bhasin presents highlights and all the goals from the latest fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two, including Millwall v Nottingham Forest.

1.00 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.05** BBC News.

BBC2

6.10 Film: The Falcon in Hollywood. (1944) **7.15 Film:** The Falcon in San Francisco. (1945) **8.20** The Trials of Life. (R) **9.10** The Trials of Life. (R) **10.00** Map Man. (R) **10.30** South Africa Walks. (R) **11.00** Great Continental Railway Journeys. (R) **12.00** James Martin's Food Map of Britain. **12.25** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **12.55** Rick Stein's Mediterranean Escapes. (R) **1.55** Maggie Smith: Talking Pictures. **2.35 Film:** Ladies in Lavender. (2004) Period drama, starring Judi Dench. **4.10 Film:** Six Days Seven Nights. (1998) Romantic adventure, starring Harrison Ford and Anne Heche. **5.45** The £100K House: Tricks of the Trade. (R)

6.45 Flog It! Thomas Plant and Catherine Southon value items at London Zoo in Regent's Park, while Paul Martin tours some of the site's listed buildings. (R)

7.30 Dad's Army. Mainwaring orders his blundering platoon to guard the bank's money until repairs on the bomb-damaged vault are completed. Comedy, with Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. (R)

8.00 Operation Stonehenge: What Lies Beneath. The concluding part of the documentary focuses on the construction, design and enduring significance of the iconic stone circle and the ancient civilisation that flourished around it. With access to the ground-breaking research of a revolutionary project led by the University of Birmingham and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute in Vienna, the programme reveals new insights into Britain's world-famous prehistoric monument. (R)

9.00 Film: Defiance. (2008) Three Jewish brothers escape into the woods during the 1939 Nazi invasion of Poland, and launch a series of guerrilla attacks on German forces. As word of their actions spreads, other refugees join them to form a larger resistance movement. However, one of the brothers fears their struggle is doomed. Second World War drama, starring Daniel Craig and Liev Schreiber.

11.05 Peaky Blinders. The Lees ransack the Shelbys' betting shop, Campbell puts pressure on Thomas to deliver Freddie and the stolen guns, and John reveals he intends to remarry. (R)

12.05 TOTP2. (R) **1.05 Film:** A Boy Called Dad. (2009) **2.20** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Canimals. (R) **7.20** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.25** Sooty. (R) **7.40** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Matt Hatter Chronicles. **8.15** Nerds & Monsters. (R) **8.30** The Munch Box. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25** ITV News; Weather. **11.30 Film:** Columbo: Swan Song. (1974) **1.30** Catchphrase. (R) **2.15** I Never Knew That About Britain. (R) **2.45** The X Factor. (R) **3.50 Film:** The Incredible Hulk. (2008) Comic-book adventure, starring Edward Norton.

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 You've Been Framed! Harry Hill marvels at a performance by One Direction lookalikes and presents a particularly horrific clip. (R)

7.00 The Chase: Celebrity Special. Samia Ghadie, Alex Brooker, Annabel Giles and Julian Clary compete to win thousands of pounds for charity by taking on one of the show's resident trivia experts in a test of their general knowledge. However, they must work as a team to build their prize pot and stay one step ahead of the Chaser. Bradley Walsh hosts.

8.00 The X Factor. Having proved themselves in front of the judges, the hopefuls must now perform for an audience of almost 5,000 as the Wembley Arena auditions continue. Expect tears, drama and difficult decisions as the contestants sing for their lives in an attempt to win a place at boot camp and move one step closer to a potentially life-changing record deal. Dermot O'Leary presents.

9.20 Through the Keyhole. Kian Egan, Christine Bleakley and Warwick Davis make up this week's panel as Keith Lemon tours mystery homes and challenges them to guess the identities of the famous occupants.

10.20 ITV News; Weather.

10.40 Film: The Shawshank Redemption. (1994) A banker wrongly jailed for his wife's murder forms an extraordinary friendship with a fellow inmate over the course of their sentences. Drama, with Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman.

1.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Trans World Sport. **6.55** Great Scottish Swim. **7.55** The Morning Line. **9.00** Weekend Kitchen. **10.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **10.55** Frasier. (R) **11.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** Gadget Man. (R) **1.25** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ayr and Newbury. **4.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.40** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.45** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.15 Come Dine with Me. Beatles-loving Scouser David Goodier hosts the final dinner party in Cambridge, hoping to impress his guests with a 1960s Merseybeat dress code and a course of "Spicy Beatballs". (R)

6.45 Channel 4 News.

7.05 Sarah Beeny's Double Your House for Half the Money. In Fleckney, Leicestershire, a couple battle the elements to renovate a dilapidated property, while in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, newlyweds expand an old two-bedroom semi. (R)

8.00 Grand Designs. GP Peter Berkin and his wife Chard, an alternative medicine practitioner, have decided to build a new home at the bottom of their garden, but cannot agree on any part of the design. Peter is a keen hobbyist who wants the house to feature a workshop where he can build a plane, and he's planning to spend twice the £200,000 budget Chard has in mind. Kevin McCloud follows their progress. (R)

9.00 Film: The A-Team. (2010) Four soldiers are sent on a top-secret mission in Iraq that results in them being imprisoned for a crime they did not commit. When they learn the culprit is trying to sell equipment for producing fake currency, they break out of prison to find both him and evidence of their innocence. Action adventure based on the 1980s TV series, with Liam Neeson, Bradley Cooper, Sharlto Copley and Quinton "Rampage' Jackson.

11.20 Film: Sexy Beast. (2000) A retired safe-breaker living in Spain is visited by his former gangland boss, who needs his help with a bank job in London. Crime thriller, with Ray Winstone.

1.05 Alan Carr: Chatty Man. (R) **2.05** Homeland. (R) **3.05** Hollyoaks. **5.10** Simply Italian. (R) **5.40** NFL: Rush Zone.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) **10.15** Ultimate Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20 Film:** The Battle of the V1. (1958) Second World War adventure, with Michael Rennie. **2.25 Film:** U-571. (2000) Second World War adventure, starring Matthew McConaughey. **4.35 Film:** The Great Escape. (1963) Second World War drama, starring Steve McQueen.

8.05 The First Great Escape. Documentary using original accounts and diaries extracts to tell the story of a prison break staged by British officers from the Holzminden PoW camp in Hanover during the First World War, inspiring the famous breakout from Stalag Luft III in March 1944 that was depicted in the classic 1963 film The Great Escape. The original plan, staged in July 1918, involved inmates making use of cutlery as digging tools to create a tunnel and bed slats to shore it up, with 29 men making it to freedom on the evening of July 24. (R)

9.00 World War II in Colour. This edition focuses on the effectiveness of the German blitzkrieg – intense military campaigns that aimed to bring about a swift victory using tanks supported by aircraft and infantry. This new type of warfare took the Allies by surprise and allowed Hitler to seize Poland and France within the space of several weeks. Actor Robert Powell narrates the story of the global conflict, told using colourised archive footage, state-of-the-art terrain mapping and cutting-edge computer graphics, and based on government papers and previously classified files. (R)

9.55 5 News Weekend.

10.00 Live International Boxing. Kid Galahad v Adeilson Dos Santos. Coverage of the super bantamweight bout at Ponds Forge in Sheffield, as the rising British star faces a Brazilian opponent.

12.00 SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.10** Once Upon a Time. Cora tries to get to Mr Gold before the dark magic dies with him. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. Highlights of the series. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes **8.00** Top Gear **9.10 Film:** StreetDance 2 (2012) **10.30** Russell Howard's Good News **11.00** Family Guy **2.00** Bad Education **2.30** Cuckoo **4.00** Close

BBC Four
7.00 Survivors: Nature's Indestructible Creatures **8.00** Yellowstone **9.00** Crimes of Passion **10.30** The Story of Top of the Pops 1979 **11.30** Animals Through the Night: Sleepover at the Zoo **1.00** Top of the Pops: 1979 – Big Hits **2.00** Yellowstone **3.00** Survivors: Nature's Indestructible Creatures **4.00** Close

ITV2
11.00 The X Factor **1.15** Take Me Out **2.45** Best of You've Been Framed! **3.45** You've Been Framed: A-Z **4.45** You've Been Framed! **5.15 Film:** Cats & Dogs (2001) **7.00 Film:** Twister (1996) **9.20** The Xtra Factor **10.20** Celebrity Juice **11.05** The X Factor **12.25** The Xtra Factor **1.25** Plebs **2.15** Two and a Half Men **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
12.05 A Touch of Frost **2.05 Film:** Columbo: Fade in to Murder (1976) **3.40** Wycliffe **4.50** Inspector Morse **6.55** Rosemary & Thyme **9.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Bomb Girls **12.00** The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes **1.10** Judge Judy **1.55** Movies Now **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 The Professionals **12.05** The New Avengers **2.20** World Rally Championship Highlights **3.20 Film:** The Battle of Midway (1976) **6.00** Storage Wars **7.00** The Motorbike Show **8.00** River Monsters **9.00 Film:** The Man with the Golden Gun (1974) **11.40 Film:** The Silence of the Lambs (1991) **2.00** Minder **3.00** Teleshopping **3.30** The Store **4.30** Teleshopping

E4
11.30 How I Met Your Mother **12.30** Melissa & Joey **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **2.30** How I Met Your Mother **3.30** 2 Broke Girls **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** Made in Chelsea NYC **6.35** The 100 **7.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **8.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Get Him to the Greek (2010) **11.15** The Big Bang Theory **11.40** How I Met Your Mother **12.40** Almost Royal **1.15** Drifters **1.50** PhoneShop **2.20** The Ricky Gervais Show **3.15** Glee **4.00** Desperate Housewives

Film4
11.00 Merrill's Marauders (1962) **1.00** Five Children and It (2004) **2.50** Big Miracle (2012) **4.55** Ladyhawke (1985) **7.20** Airplane II: The Sequel (1982) **9.00** Transformers (2007) **11.45** Sightseers (2012) **1.30** Saturday Night Fever (1977) **3.25** Close

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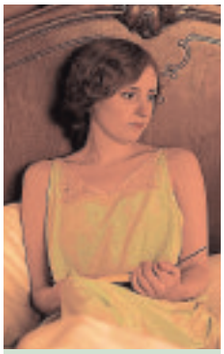

Laura Carmichael

Downton Abbey, ITV, 9.00pm
New series. The eagerly awaited fifth series of Julian Fellowes' hit period drama begins. It's now 1924, and while Britain feels the winds of change swept in by a new Labour government, Downton's residents – both above and below stairs – are undergoing alterations too. After mourning the death of his beloved wife Lady Sybil for four years, Branson decides it's time he got on with his life, although Robert isn't comfortable about the ex-chauffeur's relationship with local teacher Sarah Bunting. Mary is also ready for love again – but which of her beaus is her Mr Right? Meanwhile, Edith struggles to cope with being parted from her baby, Jimmy receives unwanted female attention and plans for a war memorial cause tension. Allen Leech, Daisy Lewis and Michelle Dockery star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. With Mark Chapman and the Match of the Day team. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Escape to the Country. **3.00** The Great British Bake Off. (R) **4.00** Points of View. **4.15** Lifeline. **4.25** Songs of Praise. **5.00** Formula 1: Singapore Grand Prix Highlights. Suzi Perry introduces the key moments of the 14th race of the season, staged at the Marina Bay Street Circuit.

6.35 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

7.00 Countryfile. In Devon, Matt Baker hears about a Second World War bomber that crashed on Dartmoor and joins a farmers' co-operative. Anita Rani meets a sculptor inspired by the local trees. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce and the team visit Kirby Hall in Northamptonshire, where members of the public bring along antiques and collectibles to hear their stories and find out their worth. Items include a jade bowl once used as a butter dish, marine paintings from the family of Captain Bligh, a vintage TV set, a medieval ring found with the aid of a metal detector and a wind-up Charlie Chaplin doll. In the new feature looking back at previous items, art specialist Philip Mould hopes to learn more about a 500-year-old religious painting, originally featured in 2010 and now fully restored.

9.00 Our Girl. New series. Lacey Turner stars in this follow-up to last year's one-off drama about an aimless young woman who joins the Army, following her deployment to Afghanistan.

10.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. A review of the latest Premier League action, which included Manchester City v Chelsea at the Etihad Stadium and Leicester City v Manchester United at the King Power Stadium.

11.50 Film: The Resident. (2011) A doctor moves into a spacious new apartment, but realises her landlord is dangerously obsessed with her. Horror, starring Hilary Swank and Christopher Lee.

1.15 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Countryfile. (R) **7.00** Monty Don's Italian Gardens. (R) **8.00** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.30** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.00** The Football League Show. (R) **10.20** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.50** Lorraine Pascale: How to Be a Better Cook. (R) **12.20** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **12.50** Rick Stein's Mediterranean Escapes. (R) **1.50 Film:** 4 for Texas. (1963) Comedy Western, starring Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra. **3.45** Flog It! (R) **4.30** Equator. (R) **5.30** Penguins on a Plane: Great Animal Moves. Part two of two. The transportation of saltwater crocodiles and wolves. (R)

6.30 Rugby League: Super League Play-Offs. Tanya Arnold presents action from the opening matches, featuring the qualifying and elimination play-offs, as the sides look to take their next step towards reaching the Grand Final.

7.30 Dad's Army. Capt Mainwaring and the platoon offer to help Pte Godfrey's widowed friend gather in the harvest on her farm – but their well-meaning efforts end in predictable chaos. (R)

8.00 Dragons' Den. A couple hope to win investment for their fruity alcohol alternative and two recent university graduates bring their range of campus fashions into the Den. (R)

9.00 Life in Solitary. Documentary following the new warden of Maine State Prison as he tries to reform the system and release dangerous inmates from solitary confinement back into the general population.

10.00 Mock the Week. Host Dara O Briain and regulars Hugh Dennis and Andy Parsons are joined by Rob Beckett, Gary Delaney, Sara Pascoe and Romesh Ranganathan for the topical comedy quiz. (R)

10.30 Peaky Blinders. Thomas deals with an IRA chief out to avenge his cousin's death, Campbell gets closer to finding the stolen guns and Grace has to decide where her loyalties lie. (R)

11.30 Peaky Blinders. Secrets are revealed that force the Shelbys to face up to the problems that have divided them, while Campbell unleashes one last plan to take down the gang. Last in the series. (R)

12.25 Film: Don't Worry About Me. (2009) **1.45** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.40** Holby City. (R) **3.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Canimals. (R) **7.20** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.25** Sooty. (R) **7.40** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Ultimate Spider-Man. **8.20** Nerds & Monsters. (R) **8.30** Big Time Rush. **9.00** The Aquabats! Super Show! **9.25** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25** ITV News; Weather. **11.30 Film:** Carry On Follow That Camel. (1967) **1.20 Film:** Beethoven's 2nd. (1993) Comedy sequel, starring Charles Grodin. **3.00** The X Factor. (R) **4.15** Midsomer Murders. (R)

6.10 You've Been Framed! Surreal comedy from the mind of Harry Hill, inspired by viewers' clips, featuring the horrors of the Harry Styles Finishing School and the sight of Beyonce without her make-up. (R)

6.35 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 Sunday Night at the Palladium. Jason Manford hosts the variety show, with music by Maroon 5, Earth, Wind & Fire, Ella Henderson and Evita star Madalena Alberto, plus Canadian acrobats Les 7 Doigts de la Main.

8.00 The X Factor. The search for a star continues at Wembley Arena as the judges give their verdicts on the hopefuls' second auditions. Dermot O'Leary meets the acts as they step into the spotlight.

9.00 Downton Abbey. New series. Branson's blossoming relationship with local teacher Sarah Bunting causes Robert concern, Jimmy receives unwanted female attention and Thomas gives Baxter an ultimatum.

10.30 ITV News; Weather.

10.50 The Unforgettable Larry Grayson. Tribute to the comedian and game-show host who was hailed as an overnight success at the age of 51 and became famous for his catchphrases and camp performances. (R)

11.20 Premiership Rugby Union. Highlights of the latest top-flight fixtures, which included Bath v Leicester Tigers, Harlequins v Wasps and Newcastle Falcons v Northampton Saints.

12.20 The Store. **2.20** Motorsport UK. **3.10** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.55** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.05 NFL: The American Football Show. (R) **7.00** Street Velodrome. **7.55** British GT. **8.30** Ironman 2014. **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **3.00** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30 Film:** Star Trek: Insurrection. (1998) Sci-fi adventure sequel, starring Patrick Stewart. **5.30** Deal or No Deal.

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Posh Pawn. Prestige Pawnbrokers boss James Constantinou and the team receive a visit from a former Chelsea footballer who has brought along some expensive watches. James is also put to the test when asked to evaluate a hovercraft from a Bond film, and an unusual painting of Saddam Hussein causes a stir in the office. (R)

8.00 Operation Maneater. New series. The Nile crocodile, the polar bear and the great white shark are three of the deadliest predators on Earth – and when they strike out at humans, it often leads to revenge attacks. In this series, vet Mark Evans tries to break the cycle of violence, and asks if technology could provide a way for us to peacefully co-exist with these creatures. His mission begins at Namibia's Chobe River, aka the crocodile attack capital of the world. With the help of experts Rom Whitaker and Dr Patrick Aust, Mark attempts a radical experiment designed to train the crocodiles to associate the sound of a bell with electric shocks.

9.00 Film: Safe House. (2012) Premiere. A CIA agent stationed in South Africa is sent to question a rogue operative, who has been arrested years after betraying the agency, only to be attacked by mercenaries hired to capture the fugitive. As they flee for their lives together, the interrogator has to contend with not only the enemies hunting them, but also the mind games of his prisoner. Thriller, with Denzel Washington.

11.15 Film: The Sixth Sense. (1999) A child psychologist takes on the case of a boy terrified by ghostly apparitions. M Night Shyamalan's supernatural thriller, with Bruce Willis and Haley Joel Osment.

1.10 American Football Live. **5.00** British GT. (R) **5.30** Simply Italian. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.55** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.05** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.40** City of Friends. (R) **7.55** Little Princess. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Wanda and the Alien. **8.40** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Access. (R) **10.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **11.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.55 Film:** Are We Done Yet? (2007) Comedy sequel, starring Ice Cube. **3.40 Film:** See Spot Run. (2001) Comedy, starring David Arquette. **5.35 Film:** Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs. (2009) Animated comedy, with the voice of Bill Hader.

7.15 5 News Weekend.

7.20 Film: Rush Hour 2. (2001) The two mismatched detectives travel to Hong Kong when terrorists bomb the US embassy, and are soon involved in keeping tabs on the prime suspects – high-ranking Triad members involved in an international counterfeiting ring. Action comedy sequel, starring Jackie Chan, Chris Tucker, John Lone, Zhang Ziyi, Roselyn Sanchez and Harris Yulin. Edited for violence and language.

9.00 Film: In Time. (2011) Premiere. Future scientists reverse the ageing process, allowing people to live for ever. To avoid overpopulation, time becomes a currency, with the rich living indefinitely while the poor must toil to stave off death. A factory worker acquires 100 years of time, and spends it fighting to redress the balance of power. Sci-fi thriller, starring Justin Timberlake, Amanda Seyfried and Cillian Murphy.

11.10 Film: Elektra. (2005) An assassin has a crisis of conscience and decides to protect the father and daughter she was hired to kill. Comic-book adventure, starring Jennifer Garner and Goran Visnjic.

12.50 True Crimes: The First 72 Hours. **1.15** SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** Once Upon a Time. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Top Gear **8.00** Doctor Who **8.50** Great TV Mistakes **9.00** Russell Howard's Good News **10.00** Family Guy **10.45** Bad Education **11.15** Live at the Apollo **11.45** American Dad! **12.35** Comedy Fest Live 2014 **1.30** Bad Education **2.00** Russell Howard's Good News **3.00** Live at the Apollo **3.30** Bad Education

BBC Four

7.00 The John Moores Painting Prize with Alexei Sayle **7.30** Secret Knowledge: Hidden Jewels of the Cheapside Hoard **8.00** Byzantium: A Tale of Three Cities **9.00** British Art at War: Bomberg, Sickert and Nash **10.00 Film:** Trishna (2011) **11.45** Big Hits: TOTP 1964 to 1975 **1.15** Quadrophenia – Can You See the Real Me? **2.25** British Art at War: Bomberg, Sickert and Nash **3.25** Close

ITV2

12.10 America's Got Talent **2.00** You've Been Framed! **2.30 Film:** Nanny McPhee (2005) **4.25** The X Factor **5.45** The Xtra Factor **6.50 Film:** Twins (1988) **9.00** The Xtra Factor **10.00** Bad Bridesmaid **11.00** The X Factor **12.05** The Xtra Factor **1.05** Two and a Half Men **1.30** The Big Reunion 2014 **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.40 Inspector Morse **1.50 Film:** Columbo: Identity Crisis (1975) **3.45 Film:** Carry On Screaming (1966) **5.50** Wycliffe **6.55** Lewis **9.00** The Best of the Royal Variety **10.00 Film:** The Hours (2002) **12.15** William and Mary **2.10** Judge Judy **2.55** World Kitchen **3.20** ITV3 Nightscreen **3.40** Emmerdale

ITV4

11.05 Police, Camera, Action! **12.05** I Want That Car **1.05** The Motorbike Show **2.05 Film:** For Whom the Bell Tolls (1943) **5.20 Film:** The Battle of Midway (1976) **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00 Film:** Troy (2004) **12.15** Hell on Wheels **1.05** Breakout **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **3.30** The Store **4.30** Teleshopping

E4

12.30 Made in Chelsea NYC **1.35** How I Met Your Mother **2.00** Suburgatory **2.30** The Mindy Project **3.00** New Girl **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **4.30** The 100 **5.30** Rude(ish) Tube **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.30 Film:** Marley and Me (2008) **10.00** Almost Royal **10.30** The Big Bang Theory **11.00** Glue **12.00** Rules of Engagement **1.00** How I Met Your Mother **1.30** Rude Tube **2.30** The Ricky Gervais Show **3.25** Hollyoaks

Film4

11.00 The Enemy Below (1957) **1.00** Avatar (2009) **4.05** 20,000 Days on Earth Special **4.10** Lonely Are the Brave (1962) **6.20** Runaway Jury (2003) **8.50** 20,000 Days on Earth Special **9.00** A Time to Kill (1996) **11.55** Tyrannosaur (2011) **1.45** The King of Marvin Gardens (1972) **3.25** Close

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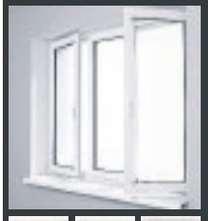

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Hollow Man, Channel 5, 11pm
A brilliant scientist tests an invisibility serum on himself, but becomes dangerously intoxicated by the power he acquires. He abandons his morals and heads out into the city to take full advantage of his condition. Realising he has been up to no good, concerned colleagues decide to confront him – with terrible consequences. Paul Verhoeven's sci-fi thriller, starring Kevin Bacon, Elisabeth Shue, Josh Brolin and Kim Dickens. (2000)

TUESDAY
State of Play, ITV, 10.40pm
A hard-nosed journalist investigating the murder of a congressman's intern discovers a connection between the tragedy and the death of a petty crook on the same evening. As he works to get to the bottom of the story, the reporter uncovers a political conspiracy that places him in a precarious and potentially life-threatening position. Thriller, starring Russell Crowe. (2009)

WEDNESDAY
Adam & Paul, Channel 4, 12.30am
Two childhood friends living in Dublin have grown up to be heroin addicts. During the course of a day, they wander the city, hoping to beg, borrow or steal enough cash to feed their habit – but their efforts only lead them into a series of bizarre misadventures. Comedy drama, starring Mark O'Halloran. (2004)

State of Play, Tuesday, ITV, 10.40pm

THURSDAY
Killer Instinct: From the Files of Agent Candice DeLong, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An FBI agent retires after 15 gruelling years to pursue a career in nursing. She is drawn back to the bureau after her best friend is raped by a man responsible for a series of murders. However, as she investigates the case, she and her son end up being stalked by the serial killer. Fact-based crime drama, starring Jean Smart and A Martinez. (2003)

FRIDAY
National Lampoon's Animal House, ITV, 11.10pm
A college's most slobbish and unruly student fraternity faces expulsion for upsetting the rigid social order of the campus, so its madcap members plan one final act of rebellion against the college dean and a preppy bunch of snobbish bullies at the annual university homecoming parade. Comedy, starring John Belushi. (1978)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Stars hope to shine bright as the competition begins

A couple of weeks ago, we got our first proper glimpse of the Strictly class of 2014 during the red-carpet launch show – and on the whole, it went pretty well.

No one fell down the stairs or out of their costumes, the celebs managed to get through the group dance without any major incidents, and if any of the professional dancers were disappointed with their matches, they hid it well (Iveta Lukosiute in particular seemed very happy to have landed former rugby player Thom Evans).

But as the competition launches in earnest this weekend, it's going to get a lot harder. Instead of being able to hide at the back during a group number, six of the couples will be taking to the floor tonight, with the rest competing on Saturday.

And this time, judges Len Goodman, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcey Bussell will be scoring them.

It's going to be a whole new experience for MasterChef's Gregg Wallace, who is used to being the one dishing out the criticism.

He says: "The judges scare me because you are working really hard and they are the experts and they are there to scrutinise everything you do. It is in their professional interest to critique you properly and that is scary. If they don't pick up on something you do wrong then they lose credibility.

"On MasterChef I let people get away with things as long as they cover it in Chantilly cream!"

Meanwhile, DJ Scott Mills admits he has probably already given at least one judge a reason not to go easy on him. "I met Craig yesterday for the first time. He was on my show and we soaked him with water. So that's probably not going to do me any favours particularly!"

Luckily, Scott adds: "He was very encouraging and nice and told me I have to just do my best. I know on the show he can be quite mean but I guess that's his job – and yesterday I found him surprisingly pleasant!"

And although some people may think that facing the panel is one of the downsides of appearing on Strictly, for one of this year's intake, it was a genuine incentive. Presenter Caroline Flack says: "Ever since I was a presenter on CBBC and used to see the Strictly judges walking around Television Centre I have wanted to be on the show... and this year the time was right."

But will she still feel that way ahead of this weekend's shows? If she's nervous, she's probably in good company, as fellow contestants (deep breath) Pixie Lott, Jake Wood, Frankie Bridge, Simon Webbe, Alison Hammond, Steve Backshall, Sunetra Sarker, Mark Wright, Jennifer Gibney, Judy Murray and Tim Wonnacott are no doubt feeling the pressure too.

At least they've got presenters Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman to put them at ease – and the knowledge that the harshest judges of all, the viewing public, don't get to vote until next week.

Strictly Come Dancing, Friday, BBC1, 9pm

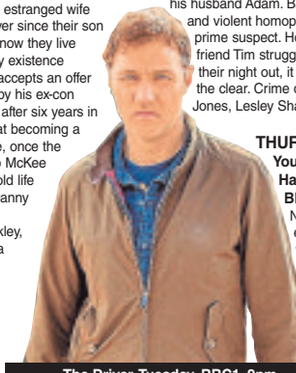
BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Cilla
ITV, 9pm
Reunited with Bobby, Cilla's confidence returns and she once again dazzles crowds with her vocal talents. The re-emergence of impresario Brian Epstein then propels her career to greater heights, but this is quickly followed by a new low when her first record fails to set the charts alight, despite being written by two local lads called John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Epstein suggests a change of direction, persuading the singer to take a gamble on the ballad Anyone Who Had a Heart, against her future husband's advice. Continuing Jeff Pope's three-part biopic charting Cilla Black's rise to fame in 1960s Liverpool, starring Sheridan Smith, with Aneurin Barnard and Ed Stoppard.

Traders: Millions by the Minute
BBC2, 9pm
The concluding programme meets a new breed of trader – the British men and women who play the financial markets online from their kitchens, sofas and bedrooms. Mother-of-three Jane squeezes currency trading in-between the school run and her work as a nurse, while Justyn and Akil are both convinced that trading will be their ticket to a lavish lifestyle. Rene gave up a successful career as an antiques dealer for a new existence as a trader, and is undeterred despite seven years of struggling to break even. Saskia Reeves narrates.

TUESDAY
The Driver
BBC1, 9pm
New series. Crime drama, starring David Morrissey. Taxi driver Vince McKee and his estranged wife Ros have blamed themselves ever since their son Tim cut ties with the family, and now they live separate lives. Vince's day-to-day existence takes an unusual turn when he accepts an offer from a criminal gang organised by his ex-con mate Colin, who has resurfaced after six years in prison. Although initially thrilled at becoming a driver for gang leader The Horse, once the criminals arrange their major job McKee soon wishes he could have his old life back. Written by Bafta-winning Danny Brocklehurst (Accused) and Jim Poyser, it also stars Claudie Blakley, Ian Hart, Shaun Dingwall, Sacha Parkinson and Colm Meaney.

WEDNESDAY
Scott & Bailey
ITV, 9pm
Rachel promised the chaos of her personal life was all in the past, but she is conflicted upon discovering her mother's new boyfriend is a violent domestic abuser. Meanwhile, Janet gets cold feet when she goes on her first date, terrified at the idea of having to sell herself to a stranger. The crimebusters are united in the search for the killer of Rich Hutchings, who is found murdered in the flat he shares with his husband Adam. Barry, their outspoken and violent homophobic neighbour, is the prime suspect. However, as Adam's friend Tim struggles to recall events of their night out, it seems Barry may be in the clear. Crime drama, starring Suranne Jones, Lesley Sharp and Danny Miller.


The Driver, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

THURSDAY
Your Home in Their Hands
BBC1, 8pm
New series. There's no end of homeowners who would happily hand over their houses to professional interior designers for a few days, as the success of shows such as 60 Minute Makeover attests. This new three-parter, though, comes with a twist: the so-called 'experts' are but amateurs themselves. In tonight's opener, Yvonne and Dan Lavery are the guinea pigs letting four budding Llewelyn-Bowens into their abode. They readily admit that they're behind the times, stuck in a decor timewarp since taking over Yvonne's parents' home. They've been reluctant to make any changes for fear of upsetting her folks, but are hoping the 'experts' can help to rip off the plaster and create something modern and exciting.

FRIDAY
The X Factor
ITV, 9pm
Simon Cowell's search for a star steps up a gear with the first of three weekend shows spotlighting the good, the bad and the downright awful singers and bands who think they have a shot at the big time. In the first of the weekend's triple bill of Boot Camps, the six chair challenge returns. Cowell, Louis Walsh, Mel B and Cheryl Fernandez-Versini must decide on the final six acts they will take to their Judge's House. However, nobody is safe in this game of musical chairs as each judge can change their mind and swap an act with someone already through with another who comes on and out-performs them. Host Dermot O'Leary oversees the wannabe contestants as they sing for their survival and a coveted place in the live shows

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BRAIN GYM No.291

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

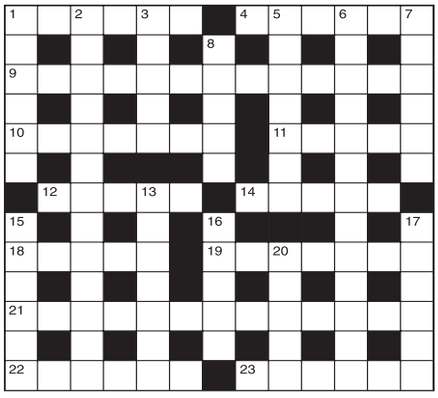
1	14
2 L	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26 A

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	Y	V	R	T	Z	O	N	X	M	J	L	P
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
S	Q	B	C	D	G	F	W	K	I	H	E	U

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Nearly all going to rocky inlet for a recess (6)
4. Just the thing for disturbing a nap! (6)
9. Should poor orators take a course in this? (6,7)
10. Meanwhile the termini have been reconstructed (7)
11. The man behind this tree is in receipt of civic honours (5)
12. Over and above an unknown quantity in revised rate (5)
14. It may come from Bach or Dvorak (5)
18. To put in a confined space will produce muscular pain (5)
19. A prize that shows degeneration (7)
21. Slight upset in temperament (13)
22. Sailor to obtain what is aimed at (6)
23. Annul a law about the sound of bells (6)

Down

1. Take a sea-trip round the south to make an attack (6)
2. A device for increasing the volume of the strong-box? (5,8)
3. Motor required after six for the clerk (5)
5. I keep clean, by the sound of it, but that's humbug (3-4)
6. No unusual charge for a flag! (8,5)
7. Beds for hens (6)
8. Pole to make this sort of speech (5)
13. A sharp answer in the letter I posted (7)
15. Handwriting used by many an actor (6)
16. Stick used for beating (5)
17. Noted book used in the services (6)
20. Increase the level of the beams, we hear (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Gossip (6)
4. Save (6)
9. Gambling (6,1,6)
10. Sweet-sounding (7)
11. Arc (5)
12. Lever (5)
14. Quick (5)
18. Adhesive (5)
19. Initially (2,5)
21. Dismay (13)
22. Roof window (6)
23. Grating (6)

Down

1. Peevish (6)
2. Captured (5,8)
3. Lean and tall (5)
5. Moral (7)
6. Disputable (13)
7. Loophole (6)
8. Convenient (5)
13. Encase (7)
15. Seasoned (6)
16. Wed (5)
17. Attitude (6)
20. Discernment (5)

Sudoku

5			2			6		8
	8	7		6		3	4	
3					7			9
		5		8			6	
	1		7		6		2	
	2			9				
2						4		7
	3	9		2		1	8	
		8			1			3

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	1	3	9	8	7	2	6	5
9	6	8	3	2	5	1	7	4
2	7	5	6	1	4	8	3	9
6	8	9	7	5	1	3	4	2
3	4	2	8	9	6	7	5	1
1	5	7	4	3	2	6	9	8
8	9	1	5	6	3	4	2	7
7	2	6	1	4	9	5	8	3
5	3	4	2	7	8	9	1	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Put on one side; 7 Light; 8 Cover; 9 Air; 10 Increases; 11 Events; 12 Finish; 15 Israelite; 17 Kin; 18 Ellen; 19 Tried; 21 Show interest. Down: 1 Private lives; 2 Nag; 3 Notice; 4 Secretive; 5 Dives; 6 Press handout; 7 Large; 10 In the know; 13 Inked; 14 Listen; 16 Ralph; 20 Ice. QUICK - Across: 1 Praiseworthy; 7 Table; 8 Felon; 9 Urn; 10 Sacrilege; 11 Energy; 12 Unfair; 15 Obscenity; 17 Bag; 18 Sauna; 19 Might; 21 Investigator. Down: 1 Picture-house; 2 Sob; 3 Wrench; 4 Ruffianly; 5 Halve; 6 Interrogator; 7 Tense; 10 Segregate; 13 Ambit; 14 Kismet; 16 Spurn; 20 Gag.

Do you organise events?

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Longleat Safari Jungle Cruise & Bath, 11 Oct	2 days £79.95
Buckingham Palace & Houses of Parliament, 27 Sep	2 days £99.95
Chatsworth at Christmas & Chester Xmas Market, 22, 29 Nov, 6, 13 Dec	2 days £79.95
York & Leeds Xmas Market 30 Nov - Frank Sinatra Tribute, 7 Dec - Michael Buble Tribute, 2 for 1 bar!	2 days £59.95
Liverpool Cavern Club & Chester, 26 Sep, 24 Oct, 2 for 1 bar!	3 days £119.95
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Blackpool Illuminations, 26 Sep, 17 Oct	3 days £99.95

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Pontins, Brean Sands	£119.95
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FOR SALE £89,500
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TIPTON

NIGHTINGALE DRIVE
FOR SALE £59,995
First Floor purpose built Flat. Accommodation comprises of: Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom. Offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN, benefits include: Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing and Off Road Parking.

PENSNETT

HIGH STREET
FOR SALE £149,995
Detached Property. Comprises of: Entrance Porch, Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Conservatory, Three Bedrooms,Bathroom with separate Shower Cubicle. Benefits include: Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Rear Garden, Off Road Parking.

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NORTH STREET
FOR SALE £92,500
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NEW
EVOLUTION, HIGH STREET
£550 pcm*
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PENSNETT

NEW
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£570 pcm*
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UPPER GORNAL

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£685 pcm*
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GORNAL

NEW
OX STREET
£625 pcm*
Semi Detached House, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom with shower, Off Road Parking, Gardens to Front & Rear, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing

STOURBRIDGE

NEW
BAGLEYS ROAD
£395 pcm*
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NETHERTON

NEW
NORWICH ROAD
£535 pcm*
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BRIERLEY HILL

NEW
HULLAND PLACE
£560 pcm*
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KINGSWINFORD

NEW
SYCAMORE ROAD
£575 pcm*
Semi Detached Property, Lounge/ Diner, Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

BROCKMOOR

NEW
STATION ROAD
£495 pcm*
Terrace Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Rear Garden, Off Road Parking, Gas Central Heating, Unfurnished

SEDGLEY

NEW
QUEENS ROAD
£770 pcm*
Detached House, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, W.C, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom with shower, Single Garage, Parking for 2 cars, Front & Rear Gardens, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing

SEDGLEY

NEW
HAMILTON CLOSE
£750 pcm*
Detached House, Entrance, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom with shower, Single Garage, Off Road Parking, Gardens to Front & Rear, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing.

KINGSWINFORD

NEW
DUDLEY ROAD
750 pcm*
Semi Detached Property, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Large Kitchen/Diner, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Off Road Parking

KINGSWINFORD

NEW
WINDERMERE DRIVE
£795 pcm*
Detached House, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Downstairs Shower Room, FOUR Bedrooms, Bathroom, Single Garage, Off Road Parking, Gardens to Front & Rear, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing.

BRIERLEY HILL

NEW
FOXDALE DRIVE
£460 pcm*
Cluster style property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Unfurnished, Off Road Parking, Front Garden

WORDSLEY

NEW
BRACKEN PARK GARDENS
£400 pcm*
Excellent Top Floor Flat, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Bedroom, Bathroom, Allocated Parking to the front of the block, maintained communal grounds.

STOURBRIDGE

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£660 pcm*
Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished

GORNAL

CENTRAL DRIVE
£510 pcm*
Semi Detached House, Lounge/ Diner, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Gardens

RUSSELLS HALL

MERRYFIELD ROAD
£550 pcm*
Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Dining Room, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Unfurnished, Off Road Parking, Front & Rear Gardens

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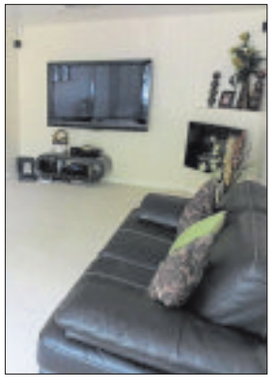

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Vauxhall's hot Astra GTC

By David Banner

An Astra GTC is available with a powerful 1.6-litre direct injection petrol engine, priced from just £20,995 on-the-road.

First seen in the Cascada convertible, and packing 200PS and 300Nm of torque, the four cylinder unit allows the GTC to achieve a top speed of 143mph and 0-60mph time in 7.3 seconds, making it the fastest non-VXR model in the Astra range.

Peak power and torque are increased by up to 30 per cent over the previous 1.6-litre turbo model, yet fuel consumption of 51mpg combined and emissions of 154g/km have meant a 13 per cent improvement in efficiency.

The engine brings sector-leading refinement to the Astra GTC range. It is the only unit in its class to feature twin balancer shafts for smooth running, while a host of sound engineering measures have been made for low noise, vibration and harshness (NVH).

Priced from £855, Vauxhall also introduced the innovative Intellilink infotainment system to the Astra GTC range.

Intuitive and user-friendly, the system features satellite navigation, voice control, Bluetooth phone and audio connectivity, picture viewer and Gracenote album art, all via its high-resolution 7in touch-screen display.

In addition, the top-of-the-range Navi 950 IntelliLink contains Europe-wide street level mapping with updates easily downloadable via USB.

Drivers can also have incoming text messages read out to them, as well as integrating their smartphones' own voice recognition functions.

"We've strengthened our Astra GTC offering with a strong and powerful 1.6-litre petrol engine and the cutting-edge Intellilink infotainment system," said Stuart Harris, Vauxhall's head of carline brand.

"Vauxhall is really throwing down the gauntlet to UK coupe sector rivals with these enhancements to our Astra GTC range."

Lifetime

With the Astra GTC and all models in its passenger car range, Vauxhall gives peace of mind for the life of the vehicle via its industry-leading Lifetime Warranty.

Available to the first owner, the warranty is valid for the lifetime of the vehicle up to a maximum of 100,000 miles.

Vauxhall has also made the top-selling Astra available with a super-smooth generation 1.6 CDTi engine, Vauxhall's cleanest-ever mid-size diesel.

Previously only available on the Zafira Tourer and the Meriva, the new 1.6 CDTi engine is now set to enhance the Astra's appeal as Vauxhall continues to significantly refresh its powertrain offer.

The much-lauded engine is available in two power outputs: 110PS and 136PS, in both hatchback and Sports Tourer body styles.

The 110PS version achieves 76.3mpg combined with CO2 emission of just 97g/km, and 72.4mpg combined and 104g/km in 136PS guise.

'It is the only unit in its class to feature twin balancer shafts.'

Quiet and refined, the 1.6 CDTi is one of the best engines in its class for noise and vibration thanks to an efficient combustion process with multiple injection, re-designed components and the use of acoustic covers.

Already Euro 6-compliant, the engine is best-in-class in noise and vibration generation.

Not only is the 1.6 CDTi super-refined, it's also clean and powerful, too.

A high-pressure common rail injection system and lean NOx trap exhaust-after treatment (LNT) improve efficiency, while a variable turbine turbocharger help make the new diesel a strong performer, too.

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07/07 Renault Clio 1.6
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£4995 / £31 Per Week

08/58 Fiat Panda 1.4
100hp, 39k, *LOW INSURANCE* Black, Alloys, Air Con, CD
£4995 / £31 Per Week

08/08 Volkswagen Polo 1.2 E, *ONLY 28k MILES* *LOW INSURANCE* Silver, CD
£4795 / £27 Per Week

08/08 Fiat Bravo 1.4 Dynamic
50k, Red, Alloys, Air Con, CD Player
£4495 / £22 Per Week

05/05 Peugeot 407 SW SE 2.0 HDI Diesel Estate
PANORAMIC ROOF 60k, Silver, Alloys, Air Con
£4195 / £30 Per Week

08/08 Ford Fiesta 1.25 Style Climate,
42k, Red, Alloys, Climate Pack
£3995 / £28 Per Week

07/07 Suzuki Swift 1.3 GL one owner
47k, Burnt Orange, CD Player, E/Windows
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07/07 Peugeot 307 1.6
S Automatic, 42k, Red, Alloys, Air Con, CD
£3995 / £28 Per Week

06/06 Ford Fiesta 1.4 Zetec
3dr, Blue, *ONLY 39k MILES* Alloys, Climate Pack
£3695 / £24 Per Week

04/54 Vauxhall Zafira 2.0 DTi Diesel 16v Elegance 7 Seater, 67k, Silver, Alloys, Air con, CD
£3295 / £23 Per Week

01/51 Skoda Octavia 1.8 Elegance
T 4WD Estate, 94k, Silver, Alloys, Climate
£1995

Finance example: Vauxhall Astra 1.3 CDTi Diesel, Cash Price £4995, Deposit £300, Amount of credit £4695, Fixed interest rate 6.25% Flat rate, 12% APR, 48 Payments of £122.28 (£30.50 per week) Total amount payable £6169.44 (Excludes £150 Document fee and £150 Completion fee, Subject to status)

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11 C4 1.6 HDI VTR+ Blue 31k	£7,995
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11 C4 G Picas 1.6 HDI VTR+ Black 20k	£10,995
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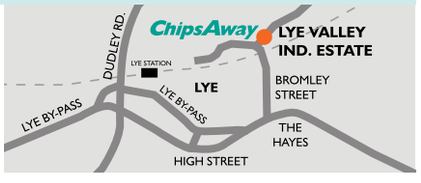

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Honda unveils its new special edition CR-Vs

Honda (UK) has unveiled two eye-catching, special edition variants of the popular CR-V, the Black Edition and White Edition.

Both share a range of bold exterior enhancements that give the car even greater road presence. The CR-V Special Edition models represent a saving of £770 compared to the CR-V SE-T combined with the relevant optional equipment.

With both the Black Edition and White Edition, the CR-V's distinctive styling is enhanced with the addition of bold 19in Orion alloy wheels, exhaust finisher and privacy glass.

A new patterned front grille gives a more powerful expression of performance, while a tailgate spoiler extends the flowing lines of the roof over the rear window to give a sleek, dynamic look. Smoothly integrated running boards add practicality and visual impact, while front and rear skid plates top the styling upgrades while protecting the underside of the car.

The special editions also benefit from the generous specification offered with the CR-V SE-T, which features dual-zone climate control, Bluetooth HFT, front and rear parking sensors and power-folding door mirrors, plus metallic paint and satellite navigation all as standard.

The CR-V special editions will be supported online at www.honda.co.uk/headturner with a campaign which dubs the new model 'The new head-turner from Honda'.

The site invites users to choose 'Which one turns your head?', with an interactive graphic showing the percentage split between those favouring black against those opting for white. Users can also tweet their preference with the hashtag #CRVWHITE or #CRVBLACK, or share their choice on Facebook.

Leon Brannan, head of cars for Honda (UK) comments: "The CR-V is already a very popular choice thanks to its combination of distinctive and refined styling and excellent versatility.

The new Special Edition Black and White enhance the range even further, offering real stand-out appeal and a bold new look. Now the only decision for customers is which colour most turns their head!"

The new models are available now in manual or automatic, with either the 2.0 i-VTEC petrol or 2.2 i-OTEC diesel engine.

On the road prices start from £28,400 for the petrol manual version. Honda (UK) is currently offering competitive low monthly PCP payments from just £309 on the CR-V Special Edition.

This new variant also benefits from a £500 deposit contribution and the 5 year Honda care package which includes five years warranty. servicing and roadside assist for £500.

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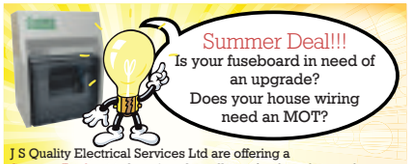

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4 Pets & Animals

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5 Business & Farming

business directory

accountants

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business opportunities

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6 Property

properties wanted

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8 Motoring

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RENAULT CLIO Dynamique, 1.4, 04 reg, 70,000 miles, FSH, female owner, £1,250. 07891 848119.

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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 713146
or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

GLADYS DAVIES
(Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 69 Amblecote Road Quarry Bank Brierley Hill West Midlands DY5 2YQ, who died on 15/08/2014, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 28/11/2014, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
GEORGE GREEN LLP
195 High Street Cradley Heath
West Midlands B64 5HW T420083

10 Personals

personal

GENTLEMAN 68
Young, modern outlook, GSOH, various leisure interests, WLTM lady 60 - 68 years for evenings / days out, Friendship, perhaps long term Relationship.
Box Number P19451 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

MALE 47 YEARS
Sociable, smart, tall, ex professional, very lonely, enjoys travel, restaurants and meeting people, seeks genuine female to share enjoyable fun and romantic times with.
Box Number P19461 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

WIDOW YOUNG 78
Non smoker, GSOH, WLTM a non smoking Gent of similar age for company on days out and holidays UK and abroad. Not much fun on ones own. Must have GSOH.
Box Number P19449 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

HAVEN'T FORGOT THE COMPLEMENT
or the fleeting glance by you. May it continue.

MALE, 66
5ft 8in, wishes to meet slim to medium build lady for friendship, possible relationship.
Box Number P19455, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

TOPMATCH. Avoid the internet dating disasters! Verified, genuine, local introductions. 0121 285 0676 www.birminghamtopmatch.co

sports clubs

GORNAL ATHLETIC U13'S S.D.Y.F.L. DIVISION ONE
We are looking for a
GOALKEEPER
to join our well established Team of over 6 years.
(current school year 7 or 8).
Contact Stu Harrison
07814 396680.

PLAYERS WANTED
Tipton youth under 13's require experienced outfield players to strengthen Stourbridge League Division 1 team.
Current year 7-8.
Call Spencer
07773 886117
Or Joe 07906 000216.

WITHYMOOR COLTS GIRLS U16S
Require experienced players to add to our existing squad to play in the SDYFL.
We train Tuesday nights from 7pm to 8pm.
Must be school year 10 or 11.
If you are interested call Paul on 07810 122846.

general

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

EASTFIELD SECONDRY MODERN SCHOOL
Willenhall Road
Wolverhampton.
A social evening/reunion night for school leavers 1961-1965.
Disco and light refreshments.
Saturday, October 11
The Victoria Inn, Deans Road, Wolverhampton, WV1 2BA, 8pm till late.
Contact Steve Winfield
07976 088197 or Barnie 07946 156770.

LOOKING FOR MY SON
Mr A Lewis
Last seen, Wolverhampton.
Please get in touch.
Box Number P19452
Express and Star
Queen Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 1ES

RESERVED GRAVE PLOT AVAILABLE
The plot is situated in the Roman Catholic section of Beacon Hill Cemetery, near Sedgley.
The plot is valued at £1,867, will sell for £1,500.
Telephone 01902 496000.

SHARES FOR SALE
BLOCK OF 500
For Severn Valley Railway Holdings, will, earn you free steam trip vouchers and support our locos.
Telephone 01902 894845.

FreeAds
IT'S FREE
IT'S EASY
*Advertise any item *FREE* up to the value of *£250* go to:
www.expressandstar.com/bookanad
Simply click the FreeAds icon FreeAds
*Private advertisers only, no guns, pets, or livestock.
Free adverts are published within 7 days of receipt, in-paper and online and are limited to 3 lines maximum.

Making Friends

Try it.. You'll love it!

YOUR local dating service, run by the dating experts who have been established since 1990. ***REAL people in YOUR area..***

Here's how to use your dating service ...

Place your advert call:
0844 887 2293
and follow the simple instructions

To ***Place*** your ad by text
Simply text **REG** followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 155 characters) and send to **80098**
FREE Standard Network rates apply.

To ***Reply*** to members from your landline call:
0906 500 3955
calls cost £1.53 per min

Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and do ***key-it-in promptly*** when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To ***Reply*** to members from your mobile call **68118**
calls cost £1.50 per minute plus network charges
Or ***Text*..REPLY26** (leave a space) the six-digit box number (leave a space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26**123456 ***hi get in touch...*** then send to **80098** Successfully forwarded messages cost £1.50 per message (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

Date ***ONLINE***
YOU can now date online or via your **mobile**
Simply ***VISIT*** us at:
http://dating.expressandstar.com

Been left a message? ***Pickup*** your replies on:
0906 500 3957
calls cost £1.53 per min

THE biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users waiting to meet ***you.. visit..*** **http://dating.expressandstar.com**

Women seeking men

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

HELEN feisty redhead with many interests including beach walks and quiet nights in, looking for male with GSOH and a passion for travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413869**

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. **Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box No: 366019**

ANN slim attractive widowed but not past being loved lady, loves travel, country good conversation, WLTM kind genuine male, 35-65 for ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413453**

FIONA, young 32yrs, seeks uncomplicated fun with chap any age or area, texts only please, I'm nervous on the phone. **Box: 4495861 Text Only**

MARIA tall, blonde, elegant, lady, enjoys travel, golf, dancing, weekends away, theatre, cinema. Seeks attractive tall gent with similar interests to share quality times together maybe more. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4477544**

EMS 32yrs petite young looking, pretty, likes swimming, walking, talking etc, seeking honest bloke or dad up to 40yrs for fun adult friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413853**

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. **Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 405297**

NATALIE 22yrs attractive brunette nurse, very slim, athletic figure, many likes, few dislikes, WLTM male up to 38yrs to stay at home and have some fun with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413839**

SAMANTHA, solvent, sensual business women, 38yrs, travels a lot and seeks fun on the road. I'm married so please be discreet. **Box: 4495859 Text Only**

MAZ 36 petite curvy big blue eyes, loves music, beach walks, cosy nights with good conversation and nice wine, seeks similar likeminded male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413571**

JASMINE, 22yrs, seeks older gent for daytime meetings as she works a nightshift most days. **Box: 4495860 Text Only**

PLACE YOUR AD BY TEXT

SIMPLY TEXT: REG
followed by your FIRST NAME, DATE of BIRTH, AREA and YOUR ADVERT (max 155 characters) and SEND to **80098**
REG 80098 Send
FREE (Standard Network rates apply)

ANITA seeking nice man in the West Midlands, 50-70 for companionship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413765**

JAN slim curvy professional warm, affectionate, looking to fill full time vacancy with similar male who loves cuddles/kisses and bikes for romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412167**

JANET tall beautiful brunette, slim 12, separated, enjoys life, no hang ups, wanting quality time, friendship and possible romance with similar guy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413415**

CHRISTINA, curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Can accommodate and will answer all calls. **Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 410127**

JAN 5ft8ins slim pretty lady in great shape, open-minded, laidback, GSOH, OHAC, many interests, WLTM someone for cuddling up with and to share good and bad times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412931**

ANN slim attractive N/S lady who is easy to get along with, looking for romantic interesting man for new adventures together, hopefully ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412911**

JULIE loving, caring, honest, seeks real gent to share conversation and have a great time, friendship/relationship, who knows? **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412777**

SALLY stunning lady looking for dinner dates, partying and generally having a good time with generous man looking for his mojo! No strings, go on call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412599**

DEBS petite attractive auburn haired, good listener, romantic, enjoys socialising, cosy nights in with Mr Right, seeking similar caring N/S single dad. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412387**

ATTRACTIVE slim brunette, 47, N/S, seeks tall, slim male for a cut above the average relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412725**

KAREN pretty blonde, short in stature, big personality, keeps fit, loves dogs, seeking honest, caring male who can make me laugh. Nothing too serious just fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412377**

JEAN petite female who enjoys golf, days out, cosy evenings in, holidays, WLTM older male in his 60's with a good personality and big heart. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412359**

JULIE really fun loving slim pretty female 38 looking for nice guy to go out with, get to know and hopefully enjoy a relationship with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411517**

SALLY, 36yrs, married but husband works away seeks discreet gent any age for fun only. **Text only Box: 4492484**

SONYA slim attractive vibrant lady with GSOH, social nature, fit/active, WLTM N/S male up to 60yrs for romantic genuine respectful relationship, loving. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413441**

GILLY, voluptuous well groomed lady, seeks man to massage and pamper. Married exciting men please apply. **Tel No: 0905 002 1933 Box No: 412933**

SOPHIA very sensual black lady looking to acquire a new distraction with lots of adult fun thrown in for good measure. Race/age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413399**

PHILLY, 20yrs, just left college, seeks older man for daytime fun, must be discreet as she has strict parents. **Text only Box: 4492485**

EMMA petite slim blue eyed blonde 22yrs, likes cinema, dancing/music, just chillin, seeking easygoing male for fun and good times but nothing serious. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413207**

ANN, young looking 40yrs seeks broadminded man of any age/location for no strings discreet times, games and more. ACA. **Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box No: 412369**

EUROPEAN beauty romantic, caring, attentive, looking for loving male to enjoy warm loving relationship with, call me to find out more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413013**

LINDY, 43yrs young, married with husband away. Seeks discreet gent any age/area for no strings. **Box 4459439 Text only**

KAREN 34 blue/green eyed size 12 attractive brunette who loves pubs, cosy nights in, kids, seeking special honest guy/dad for poss ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413005**

JENNI, sensual lady, 23yrs seeks mature experienced man for no strings, daytime fun. **Box 4459440 Text only**

ROSA 27 sexy senorita seeking older handsome prince charming to whisk me off my feet, enjoy fun times, improve my English and fall in love with. Age/race unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412927**

RITA attractive blonde with a very kind heart seeks special man to share my life with. Please get in touch if like me you are fed up with always being the single friend. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412987**

EMMA petite young looking 31yr old attractive single brunette, loves walking, talking, music, seeks honest romantic 30-40yrs. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412037**

ANNABELL 29 slim sophisticated well travelled interesting sensual fit brunette with lots to offer seeks older male to appreciate and treat me well. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412177**

KAREN slim, tall, attractive 36yr old normal female who likes shopping, socialising, nights in/out seeking thoughtful genuine male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412041**

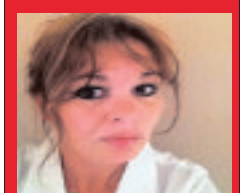
KIM 25yrs feminine, pretty, big blue eyes, GSOH, varied interests, likes romantic beach walks, cosy nights in, seeking honest loving man for ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411777**

GWENDOLINE honest, trustworthy, seeks caring gent who enjoys cinema, theatre, holidays and nights out for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412293**

DIANE voluptuous curvy and all woman, loves dancing, walking, cosy nights in, WLTM nice man for friendship, hopefully leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412321**

SARA bored blonde looking for single gents for fun, chats and meets, looking forward to hearing from you, don't be shy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412055**

PROMOTIONAL ADVERT OF THE WEEK



ANN, young looking 40yrs seeks broadminded man of any age/location for no strings discreet times, games and more. ACA. **Tel No: 0905 002 1936 Box 412369**

WIDOW 68, 5ft 5ins, medium build, attractive, likes walks, reading, holidays, seeks sincere, N/S male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411745**

JEAN young at heart lady, active, 70 plus, N/S, GSOH, likes walks, gardening, outings, WLTM sincere, caring male, 69-74 for companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411711**

TINA sexy black female looking for healthy distractions with fun adult companion, interested? You won't be disappointed, give me a call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411519**

LYNNE young looking attractive Indian female with GSOH and down to earth attitude, looking for likeminded male for date nights, hopefully more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411219**

EMMIE 50, attractive brunette, 5ft 3ins, OHAC, likes country walks, music, reading, seeks genuine, friendly, professional male with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411281**

CAROL young 47, caring, loyal, likes music, concerts, cinema, theatre, seeks male with similar interests for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411919**

PROFESSIONAL black lady, likes cooking, music, countryside, seeking honest, reliable gent, possibly farmer for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411763**

VICKY 37yr professional, mum to one, sensual and very attractive, looking for a real man, tall, fit, sincere and passionate to enjoy each other's company. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411695**

LUCY beautiful busty bubbly blonde 32yrs, seeking naughty boy to enjoy the fun side of life with, age, status and looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411691**

LINDA single and living alone, attractive, young looking, bubbly, WLTM similar young at heart companion to be close with, enjoy chats and romantic dates. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410119**

JEN attractive sensual petite blonde with OHAC seeks confident fit professional male to enjoy and share good times, if that's you pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410949**

ARE you dark or bald, with hairy chest, well built, educated, verbal, articulate dom or sub, broadminded and ready to be put in your place? Curious to find out more? call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410637**

29YR old black beautiful busty tall loving very sensual lady, likes football, making friends, seeking genuine white male for enjoyable loving relationship. Pls no time wasters. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410577**

YOUNG early 40's female, GSOH, kind, caring, considerate, seeks male for friendship, possible romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410847**

CAROL 38 attractive romantic not looking for fairy tales just happy endings, seeking lovely male to put the sparkle back into my life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410721**

CLAIRE voluptuous tall feminine attractive lady who loves good company, fine wine/food, travel, WLTM tall professional for romance dates and hopeful ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410627**

LORRAINE 5ft 9ins, slim, 57, nurse, looking for someone to look after me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410543**

MICHELLE 37, looking for laughter fun and romance with the right guy, if you could be him and have nothing to loose call me for a chat. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410415**

TAYLOR 21 black beautiful classy intelligent, loves to have lots of fun and enjoy life to the full, seeking mature guy to make me happy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409911**

WENDY 50, blue eyes, 5ft 7ins, likes music, meals out, seeks white male, 45-55 with similar interests and GSOH for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410499**

73YR old Hereford lady, GSOH, young at heart, many interests, seeks caring, genuine gent of similar age for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410331**

NICKY bubbly curvy fun blonde, varied interests, enjoys meals out, holidays, seeking N/S male with GSOH for possible ltr. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410479**

KAREN 32 a hardworking petite blonde, enjoys nights out, music, etc, WLTM for more than just friendship with similar chilled, kind, easy going guy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410461**

LIZ 5ft 7ins, attractive, outgoing, likes walks, dogs, cooking, seeks male for fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410395**

RETIRED happy, caring, attractive female, likes gardening, travel, animals, comedy, seeks tall, funny, kind chap, Shropshire. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411459**

RITA naughty 40's petite pretty female looking for that special man in my life, any age, to get to know and see what happens, you only live once remember! **0906 500 3955 Box No: 410959**

SUE 34, likes most things in life, even football! Looking for my Mr Wonderful thought I would give this a try. Come on what do we have to loose, call me. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 410765**

CAROL slim attractive blonde, sporty, easy going, broadminded looking for likeminded male with plenty of va va voom, 35-45. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 409717**

SUSAN 64, lively, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411329**

SUE 38, attractive broadminded attentive, enjoys meals in/out etc, not necessarily looking for Mr Right as Mr Wrong or even Mr Right now could be fun! Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411049**

ANGIE attractive slim blonde just looking for a lovely spontaneous guy who like me just wants good company and a nice relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410641**

KATHERINE 35yr old outgoing single female looking to enjoy dates with similar male also looking for fun times in or out. Age, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410565**

PAULINE attractive divorced female with no ties, employed with my own home, likes nights in/out, lots of tlc to give to the right person, call me for a chat, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411039**

DONNA 27yrs blue eyed blonde with cute dimpled smile, loves socialising but looking for that special someone with GSOH to cuddle up with, enjoy fun/good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409733**

MARGARET OHAC, professional, sincere, adventurous, loving, kind, solvent lady who enjoys most things WLTM caring male with similar refined tastes. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407925**

ATTRACTIVE 49yr old divorced lady, looking for honest, reliable man for LTR, 49-60. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409955**

ABBA girl blonde lookalike, size 16, attractive, bubbly, OHAC, seeking solvent, refined, handsome guy with full head of hair, 5ft 9ins plus, professional and courteous. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409151**

ZOE 25 long haired sensual female, very naughty, broadminded and open, looking for similar fun guy for uncomplicated adult meets. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409719**

JANE attractive, feminine open-minded mature female genuinely looking for adult fun. No time wasters please. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409715**

JILL 50, attractive, 5ft, blonde, own home, no ties, likes films, reading, travel, music, good social circle, seeking that someone special. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410105**

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, 56, enjoys country walks, meals out, seeks professional gent with GSOH to enjoy the good things in life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409895**

ELAINE attractive 39yr old blonde single mum seeking respectful male/dad with similar interests for adult friendship, hopefully leading to love. looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410117**

MAKE YOUR AD STAND OUT AND INCLUDE YOUR PHOTO!

For just £4.50 your ad and pic will appear in a box this size Simply text: PICREG followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert. (max 155 characters), attach your photograph and send to 07786200066. Cost £4.50 (3 x £1.50)

HI I'm Jo, first timer, newly divorced perfect size 10, blonde, attractive, tactile and looking to fall in love again. Age unimportant, dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409089**

SUSIE 32yr old nurse who likes cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine and spending quality times with great company, if you feel the same pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408877**

NEETA Black beauty, classy, intelligent 21yrs, loves to enjoy life, have lots of fun and be spoilt, give me a call. Any age, looks and status. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409101**

Men seeking women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

GENT widower, late 60's, looks younger, GSOH, likes music, good food, country pursuits, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413173**

HARD working 50 year old male, non-smoker, seeks genuine single woman for fun times and possible LTR. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4437594**

BERN presentable chap, OHAC, own hair and teeth, 58, artist, walker, seeks lady with no ties Halesowen area. Lets meet. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4483977**

JOHN 40's, tall, athletic, active, adventurous, cheeky, tactile, fun, own teeth, loves life, seeks similar fun female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414067**

JAMES, 45yrs, solvent caring gent, recently divorced seeks genuine lady to wine and dine. Single mums welcome. **Box 4459441 Text only**

IAN 57, 6ft, big build, looking for slim lady any race who enjoys walking, travel, meals in/out good, conversation, for a good relationship. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4184039**

ALAN 49, seeks lady for discreet no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413757**

BLACK guy 68, feels 45, looks 40, seeks female, 58-71, GSOH, genuine, caring for fun times and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413375**

TALL Indian gent, 53, seeks sensual lady for friendship plus, interesting chap, discreet days in and nights out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413315**

JOHN 70, tall, slim, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413183**

TONY young looking 50's male, 5ft 8ins, many interests, easy going, seeks slim rock chick or similar for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413275**

6FT 1ins slim, dark hair, likes walking, animals, seeking medium build female, 60-80 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413193**

JEFF young 62, N/S, tall, fit, energetic, seeking new female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413053**

JOHN 5ft 10ins, slim, GSOH, various interests, seeks female for friendship/relationship, 35-52. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413107**

RETIRED male, seeking no strings adult fun and frolics, discretion assured, age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413067**

TONY young looking 50, 5ft 8ins, slim, seeks slim rock chick, trendy for dates and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413049**

NORTH Shropshire male, 67, N/S, solvent, GSOH, likes walks, travel, music, holidays, countryside, seeks N/S lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412867**

MAURICE gentleman, 59, gentle, kind, caring, loving, generous, seeks lady with GSOH and similar personality, slim-medium build. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412859**

34YR old slim, dark haired, creative, adventurous, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks likeminded female to share fun and happiness with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753**

SEAN 47, 5ft 8ins, average looks, seeking genuine, honest, caring female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413945**

PHIL 57, medium build, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414063**

MALE requiring female company, enjoys evenings in, sports and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414059**

GEORGE 60 seeks Asian/Oriental female for no strings fun and weekends away. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413707**

STEVE 60, seeks slim blonde for no strings fun and weekends away. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413703**

ROBERT 59, N/S, fit, slim, seeks attractive slim female for discreet no strings friendship and fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413655**

MALE 49, 6ft, seeks lady for discreet fun times. Must accom. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413819**

TALL attractive Shrewsbury male, 54, seeks attractive female for fun and excitement in the daytime. Discretion assured. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411823**

TIGER Woods lookalike, seeking pretty BBW for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411801**

MALE 74, fit, N/S, OHAC, seeks slim lady of similar age for days out, holidays and walks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411673**

TALL mature male, seeks younger, attractive mixed race lady for spoiling and pampering. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411505**

PHIL genuine male, 57, OHAC, looking for female, any race, status and age for no strings discreet fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411461**

DEE 49, divorced, handsome, fit, slim, seeks lady, any age for lasting, meaningful relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411415**

MARK 5ft 11ins, blond hair, blue eyes, slim-medium build, athletic, likes nights in/out, socialising, meals out, pubs, seeks female with similar interests and GSOH for fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411335**

SLIM attractive Asian male, GSOH, seeks likeminded discreet female for adult friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411305**

MALE 67, seeking lady 30-50 for friendship/companionship and occasional days/nights out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411293**

INTELLIGENT sincere Shropshire male, slim, young 60's, playfully assertive, seeking complimentary, responsive, feminine lady, 50-60's who enjoys music, books, the arts and countryside. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411285**

EASY going male 45, likes sports, seeks female for relationship. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411541**

MALE seeking female companion for outings, friendship and holidays. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412705**

STEPHEN 58, good looking, likes art, travel, seeking female, 50 plus for companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412633**

MALCOLM 61, smoker, great personality, likes coach holidays, drives, pubs, meals out, nights out, 60's music, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412523**

TONY 52, dark hair, white male, 6ft, confident, GSOH, seeks black female. Genuine ad. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412481**

TALL 42yr old sincere male, caring, honest, loving, seeking female, 30-40 for fun, friendship and good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412483**

ALAN tall widower, 76, looking for female of similar age who enjoys meals out, holidays, walks and holidays. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412261**

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MARK fun loving, easy going, fair hair blue eyes, athletic, tanned, looking for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411989**

FIT bubbly male, athletic, blue eyes, short fair hair, easy going, loving, GSOH, seeking female for no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411901**

Men seeking men

DIVORCED male, young, fit 50, generous, own business, seeks male, any nationality, 18-20 for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412727**

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Villa in dreamland after win at Liverpool

Football

LIVERPOOL may consider taking down the famous 'Welcome to Anfield' sign' the next time they get a visit from Villa.

Paul Lambert's men will be far from welcome after continuing their flying start to the season with a stunning victory.

Saturday's success, courtesy of Gabby Agbonlahor's ninth-minute strike, took Villa's tally to eight points from their last four visits.

It also left the Claret and Blue travelling army chanting 'We're going to win the league' after a third win in four matches put them second in the table.

And while any talk of a title challenge will be tongue in cheek, who can blame Villa's fans for basking in the glory of a superb opening to the campaign.

Lambert's side grabbed an early lead through Agbonlahor and then restricted their hosts to few clear-cut chances.

With Daniel Sturridge sidelined for up to three weeks with a thigh injury – for which manager Brendan Rodgers has still not forgiven England – it meant Liverpool started a game without him or Luis Suarez, a summer departure to Barcelona, for the first time since December 2012.

The pair scored 56 league goals between them last term so it was immediately apparent where the Reds were most likely to be under the greatest strain.

Lambert knew this, and also the fact their opponents have still not entirely cracked the defending set-pieces thing, and that was what he targeted.

A well-drilled Villa denied Liverpool space in the final third which stifled much of their forward progress, while the visitors attacked with speed when they had the chance and were aggressive at corners and free-kicks – which ultimately produced their winner.

Mario Balotelli was brought in by Rodgers last month to provide additional firepower but he was kept in check by Philippe Senderos.

The Swiss defender adopted a physical approach and certainly made his presence felt. He got away with at least one blatant hack at the former Manchester City striker off the ballwhich would have likely resulted in a red card had referee Lee Mason or either of his linesmen seen it.

The games don't get any easier for Villa,with Arsenal at home on Saturday.

Dressage success with elite premium

HORSE breeder Sue Brennan, from Kinver, gained an elite premium with her young horse at the Baileys Horse Feeds/British Breeding/British Equestrian Federation Futurity.

The filly foal, Jemimah HH, owned and bred by Sue attained an elite premium of 9.08 in the dressage section at Solihull. An elite premium indicates that the horse has the potential and outlook to perform at international level.

Sue said: "I am thrilled with Jemimah. She is the second foal we have bred from my mare Sheepcote Compliment. Our foal last year was born too late to go to the Futurity, but we went along to watch and we were determined to bring this year's foal along. I am very glad we did!"

Jemimah HH is the fourth foal bred from Sheepcote Compliment who Sue bought from the Sheepcote Stud as a foal. Sue plans to take Jemimah HH to the National Foal Show and the Welsh Winter Fair later on this season.

She will go back to the Futurity next year and also go in-hand showing. Sue added, "I hope one day she will be a super dressage horse."

Ryan will make pro debut at the Venue

IT'S safety first for Dudley's Ryan Partridge when he makes his professional debut with a home town bout at the Venue tomorrow.

The 21-year-old light middleweight from Wren's Nest makes his bow on his own turf, where he has previously boxed as an amateur for Priory Park Boxing Club.

Partridge enjoyed a stellar career in the unpaid ranks, reaching a Clubs for Young People national semi-final in 2011 and amassing 21 victories from 31 bouts.

He also won a Uni Box belt with a victory over pro-turned back-amateur Nathan Decastro last year, making it a double success after a rematch two weeks later. Partridge will be pitted against Matthew Ashmole, a 34-year-old Welshman competing in his 21st professional fight, over four rounds.

Dudley's Ryan Aston takes one more step towards the big time with a bout at the Venue tomorrow as well.

The light middleweight has been able to train full-time for six weeks, with the pro section at Priory Park Boxing Club, to prepare.

'Tank' takes on Northern Irishman Damian Taggart over six rounds.

Lions roaring after big win in first game

STOURBRIDGE Lions opened the new league season with an initially hard fought and ultimately comprehensive win over a Ludlow outfit who never gave up.

As with the previous cup game, the Lions opened strongly, with hard driving from the forwards and slick interplay from the backs, orchestrated by man of the match Wilson at 10.

Towards the end of the first 15 mins some great forward play and follow-up saw a slick passing move put Dews away with a pass to Chance that he dotted down in the left corner. Conversion missed and 5-0.

A Wilson penalty shortly after put the Lions further ahead and then came a spirited set of attacks from Ludlow. For the most part of this period the Lions defence was outstanding but eventually, following a great run and offload by the Ludlow prop, they scored in the left corner – 8-5 to the Lions.

Penalty

Another penalty from Wilson soon after, left the score at 11-5 to the home side.

The second half developed following a stolen lineout and tremendous drive to the line by the forwards, with Doolittle carrying on from the last season by touching down on the left.

Again the conversion was missed. Almost immediately the home side put an end to the contest with a decisive intervention in midfield by Chance who roared to the line for his second try.

A momentary setback for the Lions came after some

Rugby

spirited attacks by Ludlow when Bowser senior was binned for not releasing. Ludlow missed the penalty and, down to 14 men, the Lions came snarling back to score a try with a bit of opportunism by Trinham down the right.

The bonus point secured, the Lions continued to enjoy themselves with a variety of attacks combining backs and forwards.

Boffey was held up over the line but the pressure eventually told when Dews took a pass from Wilson and advanced to the line where Chance took the ball and touched down for his hat-trick. Final score 31-5 and a hugely satisfying opening account.

There were a number of fine individual performances but t, with great cohesion and power in the forwards and outstanding defence, running and decision making in the backs. Next week is Moseley Oak and a wholly different proposition.

A special mention should go to Stuart Doolittle who captained the Lions for the 100th time on Saturday, a unique milestone.

Dale serves up a win to be third time lucky

Men's champion Dale Abbotts and ladies' champ Alison Grove with the trophies they won

It was third time lucky for Dale Abbotts as he became Wollaston Tennis Club's Men's Singles Champion for the first time after losing in the final on the last two previous occasions. Abbotts made the final without dropping a set in the knockout rounds and the trend continued as he defeated Kelvin Vincent 6-1, 6-3 in Saturday's final.

The Ladies Singles trophy was contested for by Jean Brayshay and Alison Grove.Alison secured her second title having previously won the Ladies Singles Championship in 2001. Alison's winning streak did not end there as she went on to claim the Ladies Doubles Title with Katy Piller in their victory against Amy Fellows and Hannah Didlock.

Alison then made it a hat-trick of wins in the day , winning the Mixed-Doubles Plate Final with her son Will Moloney. Perhaps the closest game of the day was in the Men's Doubles final. This saw Kelvin Vincent and Dave McEwan overcoming Pete Talbot and Dave Southwick, but only after being forced into a final set which was won 7-5.

Pete Talbot was also involved in the Mixed-Doubles Final, this time, with partner Louise Jew. Despite being 5-2 down in the final set, they overcame Pauline Clutterbuck and Dave McEwan to win the decider 7-5.

Heathens select semi opponents

CRADLEY have picked arch-rivals Mildenhall as their National League play-off semi-final opponents.

Heathens bosses got the choice after topping the table and have opted to face the side which pipped them to the title two years ago in controversial circumstances at King's Lynn. The teams will meet over two legs with the winners facing Coventry or Kent in the final.

The first leg will take place at Monmore on Tuesday, September 23, with the return at West Row on Sunday, October 5. Heathens have reserved Tuesday, October 7, for the home leg of the Knockout Cup Final should they see off Coventry. The away leg has yet to be arranged.

Success in singles and the doubles

PROMISING teenager Tom Welsh highlighted the growing junior section at Bewdley Tennis Club by winning both its men's singles and doubles titles.

The 15-year-old, who doesn't turn 16 until December, dethroned defending champion Alfie Sylvester, 18, with a brilliant display to win 6-2, 6-1.

Welsh's forehand and double-fisted backhand yielded a series of winners.

It was a double blow for Sylvester who earlier saw his hopes of a fourth doubles title with elder brother Jack, 21, denied by Welsh and partner Jack Henfield. One Sylvester celebrating was Alfie and Jack's mother Mandy who chalked up a tenth singles title.

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Big opening day win
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Sports Desk 01902 319531 email: Chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Win for Stour but mistakes creep in

STOURBRIDGE RFC got a bit of a shock after cruising to a 19 point lead against Luctonians.

Stour allowed errors to creep into their game which the visitors pounced on to score a couple of tries. They grabbed another with an early second-half breakaway, but Stour composed themselves, set about imposing their authority up front and finally forced a fourth try from short-range. With the job done they were content to shut down the game to open their home league campaign with a less-tha-pretty bonus-point victory.

Stour's intention to move the ball around was clear when an early penalty near halfway was tapped and run by scrum half Jon Higgins.

Lucs mounted a late push-but Bown's penalty kick following a further scrum transgression added three points to deny the visitors the bonus point as the clock ran out. Final score Stourbridge 27 (4T), Luctonians 18 (3T).

There is rugby on Saturday at Stourton Park when the Lions take on Moseley Oak in Midlands 2 West, kick off 3pm.

Stourbridge make the short journey to Leicester Lions, the supporters coach leaving at 11am for a 2pm kick off.

Yeltz get away FA Cup draw

HALESOWEN secured a safe passage into the FA Cup second qualifying round with three goals in 15 second-half minutes.

Previously unbeaten Sutton's only attempt on target came after 14 minutes when Andre Gonzalez struck straight at home goalkeeper Matt Sargeant.

The Yeltz came out of after the break with all guns blazingand took the lead when Elliott Turner's 49th-minute long free-kick sailed straight past Evans into the far corner.

Defender Curtis Tilt nodded home Turner's 56th-minute corner to double Halesowen's advantage, and three minutes later Thompson-Brown made it a comfortable 3-0 by curling home the goal of the game.

Halesowen are away to Ellistown and Ibstock United in the second qualifying round of the FA Cup.

Six-star kicking show puts boot into DK

Rugby

DUDLEY Kingswinford were slowly kicked to defeat as Scunthorpe landed six kicks out of six and led 18~6 with seven minutes to go.

Scunthorpe made use of their full back Steve Johnson whenever he was in range and he didn't disappoint, although DK pulled it back near the end to make it a close finish.

The first half ended 6~6. DK's Kieran Pinches had kicked two penalties, and Nick Adams had missed one from long range but it was only just off line.

DK also kicked one for the corner which was within Adams's range. The DK line out was struggling to produce clean ball in the first half and the crowd were vocal about 'not straight' at some of the Scunthorpe ball into the line out, but not the referee.

Considering DK had shipped 11 tries the week before, the defensive effort was excellent and there was no real threat to DK's line in the first 40, and, in fact, on a couple of occasions Pinches had deftly kicked into the Scunthorpe 22, only to be foiled at the line out.

In truth, neither team could claim to really be on top, so a 6~6 score at half time reflected the efforts.

The second half developed in to a pattern, DK counter attacked with wide sweeping moves from deep which stretched the Scunthorpe defence one way then back again, but they too often ended with the referee's whistle at the breakdown and often a Scunthorpe penalty.

In fact, throughout the half full back Johnson was given shots at goal which he hit through the middle every time until it became 6~18 with seven minutes to go. Then, following the restart DK won a penalty, kicked for the clubhouse corner, collected a long ball at the line out and attacked their line. This lead to the forwards driving towards the line again and they were able to release Connah Jones to score a try. Pinches added the extras, vital because it had secured a bonus point.Final score DK 13~Scunthorpe 18.

● A reminder that DK will welcome England head coach Stuart Lancaster to the club tomorrow night for an evening of rugby talk. Tickets are £60.

BEN IS SPOT-ON FOR GLASSBOYS

STOURBRIDGE put on a dominant display at Market Drayton to come from behind and take their place in the FA Cup second qualifying round.

Despite going behind early on, the Glassboys hit back with a brace of goals from Jordan Fitzpatrick and a late penalty, which was coolly sidefooted home by Ben Billingham.

Football

But a Cup upset looked to be on the cards when the Gingerbread men took the lead after 11 minutes, thanks to a Paul McMullen header.

Gary Hackett's side then took control of the tie and deserved to be level on 32 minutes when Fitzpatrick rose highest to head home a Billingham cross.

Stubbornly, though largely still on the defensive, Drayton Town stayed in the hunt until Fitzpatrick's crucial second.

The visitors made their pressure tell again on 58 minutes when Fitzpatrick's shot from the edge of the box beat Oleksanddr Ilchenko.

Stourbridge secured their place in the next round draw with a third goal on 79 minutes when Billingham was brought down in the box by Robert Spooner before getting up and firing home the penalty, with the debutant keeper making a brave effort to keep the ball out.

Town, with very little left in the tank, managed to muster one last effort – when Bennett hit the bar.

Non-league minnows or not, both sides got close to the cup as the trophy went on show at the ground before the match. But Town boss Dorian Garner, not one to seek excuses, readily admitted: "Stourbridge were clearly the stronger side. I have reservations about some of the referee's decisions but no complaints about the outcome – the better side got through."

Stourbridge boss Gary Hackett reacted to the early shock of McMillan's goal ferociously.

The Glassboys laid siege on keeper Ilchenko's goal with such intent that, at one stage, Town needed goal-line clearances to help deal with a string of five successive corners.

It Roy of the Rovers stuff but all too good to last and when Jordan Fitzpatrick equalised with a fine glancing header to the far corner on 32 minutes, Stourbridge were on their way.

Stubbornly, Drayton stayed in the hunt for another 25 minutes until Fitzpatrick's crucial second.

Then there was Billingham's penalty which made the game safe.

Stourbridge are drawn at Blaby and Whetstone Athletic in the next round on September 27.

Ben Billingham is a picture in concentration as he slots home a penalty in the 3-1 win at Market Drayton

Baggies need win and fast

MID-SEPTEMBER is much too early to declare a football club in crisis – but Albion doesn't half feel like one right now.

With a chronic lack of goals, kamikaze defending, fans and players at each other's throats and a host of summer signings yet to make their presence felt, the season could hardly have started worseThey lost at home to Everton 2-0 last weekend and are second from bottom of the Premiership with agame at Spurs on Sunday.

After a brief injection of optimism thanks to a summer overhaul of the squad, they are back to feeling like a club painfully ill at ease with themselves.

And at the centre of the emergency is a very decent, likeable man who finds himself turning into a lightning rod for two years of anger and frustration.

Alan Irvine stands accused by a growing number of Baggies fans of being 'out of his depth'. The charge is harsh. Yet Irvine is wise enough to know that pressure is beginning to mount and will continue to increase until he can find a way to win a game or two.

New boy brings Darlaston victory

DARLASTON made it two consecutive wins and kept their first clean sheet of the season in this hard-fought victory at Long Lane, helped by new boy Richard Young.

The signing from Sporting Khalsa, on as a substitute for the injured Reeves, whipped in a superb cross, met by Swann with a header from six yards out.

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